



Innkeeper's Fire

Sightings of a sacred hearth

Vol. 2

Richard Mc Sweeney

Innkeeper's Fire

- Sightings of a sacred hearth -

Volume II of II

By

Richard Mc Sweeney

Risteárd Mac Suibhne Uí Éire

INNKEEPER'S FIRE
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Author's disclaimer:

While I have made every attempt to ensure that the style and editing of this work is of the highest standards, I ask for your understanding if you should happen therein upon anything to the contrary.

For further information on the author, visit his website:

<http://www.rivers2c.com>

Email: rich.etidings@gmail.com

To the Beloved Profundities of my life ~
Sung-ja my wife, son Richard, and daughter Iris

A hiding place of mine own for mine own throughout
the ages of mine own past, mine own present,
and mine own future.

Also by Richard Mc Sweeney

Myriam of Lebanon

A Jesus of Nazareth

Generations Reaching

Hearing in the Write

Richard Mc Sweeney of the ancient and enigmatic isle of Éire writes on a variety of themes, but primarily on those to do with promoting beauty, good-naturedness, love of family, artistic expression, respect for the natural world, and cosmic considerations.

Having spent six edifying years as a seminarian with the Missionary Society of St. Columban, Richard came to the conclusion that his calling in life was to be sought elsewhere. Thus, journeying onwards with a great sense of gratitude and many happy memories he came to sojourn for some nine years in the Republic of Korea followed by three in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and a further three in the United Arab Emirates.

While in Korea he earned a master's degree in Chinese Philosophy from Seoul National University, and a bachelor's in Korean Language and Literature from Kyunggi University. Both of which were conducted entirely through the mediums of Korean and Classical Chinese. He holds a diploma in Philosophy & Arts from St. Patrick's College, Maynooth in the county Kildare.

Richard a native of Fermoy in the county Cork lives with his wife and two children in the idyllic border village of Tallow in the county Waterford.

Rísteárd Mac Grailt the Innkeeper's Sunday Eve
Invocation to the Ancestors

Silently to himself, saying,

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of
Bygone Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.



Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Rísteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him is his guest, Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over on the windowsill and from the one on the table.



Introduction

Innkeepers' Fire is a keeper; a fascinating piece of literary art, best read as philosophy expressed through a poetic means all of its own delightful design. Some nineteen years in the making, the earliest section of the work dates from early autumn of 1991 right through to late spring of 1992. It contained forty succinct stories, and was written in the joyful, supportive company of my wife Sung-ja, son Richard, and daughter Iris in our pretty apartment south of the great Han River, in Seoul the capital of the Republic of Korea.

While an overarching conceptual frame of ideas had been with me for some time up to then, I had as of yet not encountered a compelling enough situation; a catalyst as it were that would have strongly encouraged me to formulate my ideas on paper. However, that very quickly changed with the outbreak of the United Nations authorised Gulf War of the 2 August 1990 to the 28 February 1991.

On a visit back here home to Éire in the summer of 1993, I had these forty stories privately published as a short and compendious paperback. It was titled *Oriental Mystique*. Copies of this work are kept in the Library of Congress, Harvard College Library Cambridge, British Library, and in Trinity College Library Dublin.

Some years later, and now teaching in Jeddah, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a generous opportunity presented itself which enabled me to have these stories internationally published. In the summer of 1998 a version (with some minor modifications on the previous publication) appeared, and was titled *A Misty Night Canticle*. Copies of this work are also kept in the British Library, and in Trinity College Library Dublin.

Having completed my three-year contract in Jeddah, I had gone on to spend a further three years teaching in the United Arab Emirates before returning here to Éire to settle for the time being. That was in mid-June of 2001.

Ever since the publication of *Oriental Mystique* and even more so with the publication of *A Misty Night Canticle* I had been contemplating adding a commentary section to these stories which would take the form of poetic/rhetoric dialogues; intriguing natural conversations of the lyrical kind. I felt the stories needed to be interestingly teased out, thus providing the reader with the opportunity to become more personally acquainted with them.

I envisaged a work that would well bespeak in continuance and similitude of sincerity, scope, and style the charming storytelling ways of my father Richard Mc Sweeney of Ballyvourney, and of my mother Joan Healy of Glanworth, and of their fathers and mothers before them, and of our ancestors going way way back on either side by humble cottage and grand hall hearth; a continuance and similitude that would be seen to be in no small way a worthy 21st century epiphany of the rich literary heritage of Éire.

With this in mind, I had been examining and reflecting upon the methods used by such innovative and creative greats as Gibran Kahlil Gibran in his *The Prophet*, Friedrich Nietzsche in his *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Iohannes Scottus Ériugena in his *On the Division of Nature*, Titus Lucretius Carus in his *On the Nature of Things*, and Chuang-Tzu in his *The Chuang-Tzu*; William Shakespeare in his *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and John Millington Synge in his *Riders to the Sea*.

Then abominable 9/11 happened, and I could clearly discern in it that a catalytic moment had come upon me to provide the original collection of stories with extensive and in depth commentaries.

Composition of the commentaries began in earnest in November of that same year in the joyful, supportive company of my family here in our lovely home in Tallow, south of the gentle Bride River. The work carried on all the way through to March of 2003. Each and every story was provided with a dialogue distinguishable by its poetic and rhetoric qualities; a commentary in the form of an intriguing natural conversation between the teller of the story and the listener. Once the story was delivered the listener would ask certain questions of the storyteller on elements that were of interest and of concern to him or her.

Being now well satisfied with this completed work, I set it aside for the next three years while I applied myself to other writing projects, namely that of *Hearing in the Write*, *Generations Reaching*, *A Jesus of Nazareth*, and *Myriam of Lebanon*.

On a side note, publication of these works has been in reverse chronological order. The first being *Myriam of Lebanon* followed by *A Jesus of Nazareth*, *Generations Reaching*, and *Hearing in the Write*. And now *Innkeeper's Fire*.

With revisiting the work in the closing months of 2007, I made some slight modifications here and there. However, aside from the digital artwork introducing each of the chapters (acts) the original stories were left intact in their original forms as they had been presented in the 1998 internationally published version, and so too were the commentaries that were added between 2001 to 2003. The reason for this being that I wanted to preserve them in their unique

time settings: namely just before the dawning of the Internet Age proper, and the aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy.

At the time of writing the original stories back in 1991-92, it would be true to say that literally I knew very little of what was the Internet. Hence this having been the reality with respect to my knowledge of what was to become THE INTERNET, it is quite amazing that so much in these stories can now be appreciated as having accurately foreseen and anticipated with remarkable prescience some of the major difficulties we are today experiencing with the Internet Age, not to mention with the destructive consequences created by the disgraceful lack of moral conviction displayed by the United Nations on several opportune occasions, when with just a little bit more reflection and a great deal more effort, it could so very easily have had assured a more compassionate, dignified, and peaceful world for everyone in these following years and beyond.

Innkeeper's Fire comes in two volumes; volume I contains Acts 1-22, and volume II, Acts 23-40. It is being presented as an opera of place rather than as a drama of place as the setting for each act and its performance may be said to resemble more that of an opera performance than that of a theatre. With just a slight movement of the imagination one can easily see, hear, feel, and come to know this to be so for the voices, sounds, and silences found therein are all simply music expressed in a particular rhythm, pitch, melody, and harmony, and in a style and deliverance all of its own wondrous composition.

I have chosen a traditional Irish setting which is very close to my own heart, namely that of the convivial ambience of sitting around a cosy open hearth telling stories and then discussing them at length for half the night. Here on the isle of Éire, as surely in many other places too, the tradition of telling stories about the hearth has

been honoured and treasured by our people for centuries and centuries be they sitting about the hearth within their simple cranogs, cottages, country houses, castles grand or by road away caravans.

The hearth within these pages is seen as a bright window way to our ancestors; a natural, and faithful expression of Sacred Hearth Sun's presence deep within the home, deep down within the isle, deep down adown within the planet. For verily, like all peoples we have down through the ages naturally treasured sitting and chatting with each other, and with the welcomed stranger about sacred hearths be they off in the ever so quiet crisp Arabian desert night air, or here in the wild windy winterish evenings of this North Atlantic isle; delighted we have however and wherever in sitting and chatting together about gently crackling, softly singing, sacred fragrant hearths. And who knows knows it to be so, that these sacred fragrant hearths well serve as ever-present living home sweet home emblems of Sacred Hearth Sun's wondrous presence within our own bosoms.

Each and every act has the same format: a prologue, and the presentation of a story followed by an in depth conversation. While there are forty different stories with their accompanying conversations told by the one same storyteller to forty different listeners, the work may also be understood as giving the impression of being a single multifaceted story accompanied by an equally multifaceted conversation, and again told by the same storyteller to one lone listener albeit a listener who is of various roles, and whose personality types, experiences, and cultural backgrounds all greatly differ.

Rísteárd Mac Grailt the innkeeper; the knowledgeable, adept, self-taught storyteller as well as faithful invoker and recipient of ancestral blessings and inspiration, first tells a story (sighting) to his

special guest, Receptive. This is then followed by a very enlightening conversation initiated by the guest on the content of the story. Throughout the work the identities of all guests save for two or three are kept anonymous (hence the anonym "Receptive"). Come equinoxes and solstices all storytelling sessions take place on Sunday Eves, in other words on Saturday nights.

An important feature of the work is the invitation to the reader to seek white space knowledge; the hidden knowledge found in the depths, widths, and heights about the written word; inclusive of the hidden knowledge found between the letters and punctuation markings of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. Wherever there is white space there exists hidden knowledge. And it may well be said that there is no white space that doesn't contain hidden knowledge. The encounter with it is subjective to the reader, in that white space knowledge welcomes and respects the level of knowledge being brought to it, and as such responds to it accordingly; never too easy nor never too difficult, just comfortably hovering there somewhere betwixt and between.

The stories and their respective conversations in this multi-layered contemplative work cover many compelling contemporary topics, ranging from those related to Art and Artistry, Astronomy, Bioethics, Economics, Environment, Extraterrestrial life, Family, History, Human dignity, I-ching, Language phenomena, Marriage, Parentage, Philosophy, Relationships, Religion, and to Technology just to mention but a few.

What truly distinguishes *Innkeeper's Fire* and provides it with its definite strength has to be the time frame in which it was written, the diversity of topics addressed, the boldness of thought explored, and throughout the charm of presentation maintained. The lyrical simplicity and inventiveness of the discursive language employed,

and its potent ability to bring about a qualitative change in the way we look at life and ourselves makes the work a very attractive read. To achieve this effect an abundance of artistic, literary, mythic, religious, and symbolic motifs have been brought into play.

Innkeeper's Fire effectively communicates that it is an ongoing human obligation to think life in a new and different light. The flamboyancy and style of both the stories and their commentaries ensures a highly enjoyable and most rewarding encounter. Its profundity will at times bring tears to the eyes. While cryptic and esoteric elements are subtly and copiously scattered here and there throughout the text, they won't in anyway distract from the reader's enjoyment of the work, rather will instead be handsomely adding to their enjoyment of it. The work takes the position that there is nothing that isn't mysteriously related to everything else in some way or another.

Innkeeper's Fire is being presented as a landmark work in the tradition of clear independent Irish thought; in the tradition of spontaneous, independent, Irish philosophical speculation of the most natural, and native kind. The ever-embering presence of this tradition has been softly glowing with us down through the ages in the treasured burial caverns, rock designs, artifacts, stories, poetry, and writings of our gracious ancestors. Yet, there have been but brief memorable moments when this softly glowing embering was with the laying of well footed May-dried turf, spontaneously given to kindling itself into a passionately glowing fire in the hearth of Irish and global intellectual thought. Such a rare, beauteous, and auspicious moment, like unto the appearance of a supernova in the heavens, I see as having last occurred in the welcoming, self-culturing mind of the 9th century independent Irish philosopher Iohannes Scottus Ériugena.

I have grown to greatly admire Ériugena for his intellectual brilliance, his originality, his courage to freely and profoundly speculate, and above all for his focus on harmony, yet I need, however for it to be made clear from the outset, that this should not be taken in any way to mean or to imply that I share his Neoplatonic ontological explanations on how everything is. This having now been said, I feel we need to regenerate in our own day such an openness of mind as Ériugena's; such a spirit that will with style and finesse boldly speculate on the given existence. To be of such a lyrical spirit is to be at one with the ever-becoming generations of yesterday, today and tomorrow. May it continuously be that there be in place and time enlivened metaforms of this fragrant metaphor kind.

Some eleven centuries would dilatorily pass before the tradition of clear independent Irish thought; spontaneous, independent, Irish philosophical speculation at least of the Ériugenan kind would again make its reappearance. In the big scheme of things this is but a moment, but here on planet Earth this has been quite a long time. And this in no way is meant to deny the existence of the many other great Irish thinkers in that long span, especially those who have been influenced in one way or another by Ériugenan principles, but rather to bring out the idea and the image that the particular self-cultured Ériugenan adventurous type and style of free thinking has not been with us now in person for such a very very long time.

Its reappearance and regeneration as presented in *Innkeeper's Fire* (and in my other works); its journey from the banks of the rivers of Éire, to the banks of the Seine of Paris, the Han of Seoul, and the Bride of Tallow, respectively has not been conveyed to me per se by means of those many great thinkers, but rather as it were by means of transcending rainbows of vestige thought forever forming themselves o'er the landscape of my heart. Incidentally, this is no 'pot

of gold' I happened upon by chance at the end of a rainbow of a soft misty morning in July, no rather the rainbows themselves have been the vessels of gold; vessels of gold on means of old on how to spontaneously speculate along the banks of rivers to seas continuously.

As an independent self-publisher of spontaneous, independent, philosophical speculation, I have with careful consideration and reflection felt obliged to invoke unto myself some kind of a 'regal prerogative' when it comes to promoting my own work, for we of the lonelier way (i.e. the self-publishing way) have no voice at the moment but our own with which to make our work known. I have as such found it necessary to courageously crown myself with a regal prerogative of my own making, that I may write and speak honestly and confidently of the worthiness of my various works as they seem to me to be. Those of a more conventional publishing bent or in some cases perhaps a conventional publishing captivity be they literary agent, publisher, book critic or even reader will naturally be inclined to view such a step as being very Bonapartean or Ecoian of me; an affront to humility and will therefore want to reject my work out of hand. This though very understandable is far from acceptable, for assuredly, Umberto, Napoleon, and the likeminded would for the sake of future generations have no problem whatsoever with I taking my precious work's literary destiny out of a confounding impasse, and placing it securely into my own self-confidence.

It seems to me there is everything right about having the conventional method of publishing and the digital on demand self-publishing coexist in a healthy competitive harmony, and even from time for them to delight in lending each other a helping hand. Surely the sun does not begrudge the existence of the humble candle burning away softly in the depths of night nor in the noon hour of the

day is the candle envious of the mighty sun. Clearly the enlightened and nobler way is of mutual respect and grateful dependency.

Quintessence of humility as I understand it, demands that I gather only to give, and have only to share. The best qualified to critique the quality of my work are its receivers: the world readers of today, tomorrow, and beyond, and it is they too within their own private and public contexts who will be interpreting it accordingly for themselves; interpretations that may very well by subtle twist of word or phrase differ greatly from what I had in mind at the time of writing. This is anticipated and welcomed so long as such interpretations are devoid of any wilful misappropriation and distortion of the written word. Isolating phrases from their natural contextual settings would not alone amount to a tarnishing of my efforts, but would be nothing short of a defamation of the rich literary heritage of Éire. Should such an injustice and the like be ever given to appear, (may it never be given to appear) mark it well that it is written here at the gate for all to read and contemplate, that even from the beyond of tomorrow will I defend my honour, and that of the integrity of my noble literary heritage.

In the preface to *Russian Album* (2006) featuring the wonderful Russian soprano Anna Netrebko singing arias of her homeland, Valery Gergiev director of the St. Petersburg Mariinsky Theatre, speaks of her as follows:

"Even if she learns many more new parts, this (the role of Natasha Rostov in *War and Peace*) will remain one of the chief roles in the life of Anna Netrebko. That's because this type of heroine perfectly fits her dramatic, vocal, and musical possibilities. And she also corresponds ideally to the character's visual conception."

Inspired by his words, and enchanted by the luscious voice, incandescent beauty, musical technique, and natural drama of Anna Netrebko, I am lightheartedly given over to metamorphosing: Even if I write many more new books, this (the role of Risteárd Mac Grailt in *Innkeeper's Fire*) will remain one of the chief male character roles in my life. That's because this type of calm, wise, bright, joyous, courteous, warm voiced, nuptial hermit and family man; this rural philosopher-poet who tells mythic stories and engages in homely conversations perfectly fits my imaginative, writing, and poetic possibilities. And I also feel I correspond ideally to his lyrical outlook on life.

To date, Risteárd has to be without a doubt my signature male role, and *Innkeeper's Fire* with its fascinating repertoire of overtures, recitatives, arias, choruses, and silences (prologues, invocations, stories, conversations, and silences) my celebratory incarnation of spontaneous, independent, Irish philosophical speculation.

And may it be on bright fresh spring mornings of yet to come, that you the generations unto the ages of the ages will confirm what I have written here this day to have been quite true all along, and in joyfulness of heart may you from whence with it be in goodly company. Ave.

Tallow
6th January 2008

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ACT 23. Beautiful Obscura

Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 23. *Beautiful Obscura*

Prologue:

Anchored in the brightly shimmering waters off Mónatrébun this lovely July morning is the beautiful white 223ft motoryacht the *Tara Fountaine*.

Within the hour she will be cruising away to the south to take in Oporto, Cádiz, Monaco, Sorrento, Al-Iskandariyah and Haifa on her leisurely five month voyage home to Tripoli of the Levant.

Rísteárd & family, including Bealtaine and Samhain arrived home at the inn yesterday afternoon after their annual circumnavigation of the isle on board their friend's motoryacht, the *Tara Fountaine* which visits the shores of Éire every summer from Tripoli.

The wonderful cruise had got under way on the morning of July 16th beyond the Mónatrébun headland which is in the south of the hill country, and returned there by moonlight in the predawn of yesterday, having visited seven of the nineteen sacred headlands of the isle.

After enjoying a delicious traditional breakfast on board with their beloved friends, Rísteárd & family, including Bealtaine and Samhain said their farewells and went ashore on one of the yacht's tenders.

Throughout the cruise the green coastline had been visible off the port side while off the bow and starboard dolphins and seals kept playful company.

On the afternoon of July 22nd at 51° 37 north latitude, 10° 24 west longitude a pod of five míol mór gorm were sighted 160 metres off the starboard side. The largest of the blue whales had surfaced the clear emerald sheen with a massive blow measuring 18-20 metres in height.

Engines on board the *Tara Fountaine* were disengaged to allow the magnificent lifeforms to cruise on by in the comfort of their own acoustic harmony. All on board were awed by their grace and size, especially were the children; even Bealtaine and Samhain were fascinated by the moment.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Rísteárd is sitting in the sunglowed hazel grove singing with the birds. Sweet scent of honeysuckle is wafting its way through. Snoozing over by the well wall are Bealtaine and Samhain.

Entering this scene on foot from the direction of the inn by way of the sprays of snowy-pink blackberry blossoms is Rísteárd's guest, Receptive.

A welcome is given by all.

Rísteárd Ah, this lovely Sun, Receptive revives to my eyes the sighting of *Beautiful Obscura*.

Receptive How does it proceed, Risteárd?

Risteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, *Receptive*
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon *Receptive* too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Risteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?

I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening, Rísteárd also from the very beginning.

Rísteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another world)

A crowd of about three hundred has come to the small plaza to listen to him. It is afternoon. Chaubran and friends stand also in their midst in anticipation of his arrival and what he might have to say.

'Hush! He's coming along by the wall like a slow-moving shadow.'

He steps on to a platform which elevates him just a few centimetres above the heads of the people. He wares a single rich green free flowing garment which covers him from his shoulders to his feet. His head, except for the facial area is covered with a type of golden hood which extends down to his waist on all sides.

The crowd is amazed with the profound depth of his words which he presents to them in elegant simplicity.

'Chaubran! I can see where his face should be but there is no face only a beautiful obscura feature. How can I know

who is? In fact, I don't even know his name or if he is qualified to speak before us.'

'Listen carefully, Demandze to what he has to say. That's enough for now. Maybe afterwards we can have a chance to meet him and ask him about himself.'

Upon finishing his words he slips away off the platform, and has already left the place before anybody realizes he has gone.

'Which way did he go, Chaubran?'

'I don't know, Demandze. He's gone. It would have been nice to meet and talk with him. At least we have his words, and we need to think about them deeply.'

'I would like to have known what were his qualifications, Chaubran. Qualifications should always take precedence.

Although his words were exactly touching on the decisive issues of today's world, yet if I find out that he hasn't attended a prestigious institution of learning, I don't want to have little or anything to do with him. It's that simple, Chaubran.

Oh! I don't mean to include you, of course. You're the exception, Chaubran. As you know, I've got two PhDs from two of the most prestigious institutions of learning in the world.'

With smiles and laughter did Chaubran make reply
saying,

'I know. In fact half the world knows, Demandze.'

Chaubran is walking alone in the shade of some willow
trees. It is here that he sees him sitting by a brook and gazing
out into the distance.

'Excuse me, for interrupting, but aren't you the one who
spoke in the plaza two afternoons ago?'

'Yes, it is. Please sit down. Welcome to one of my many
places of learning.'

'Your words impressed me very deeply. However, one
thing has been bothering me since then. Although I was
standing just a few meters in front of you in the crowd I could
not see your face. Where your face should be there was only a
beautiful obscura feature. Yet, I have no problem in seeing
your face now. Why is that?'

' There is no need for the independent bona fides author
of a book to be excessively taken up with revealing who he or
she is or what is their social and educational background. It is
enough merely that one passionately shares what one has
deeply reflected upon with a pure heart. If today, tomorrow or
in the future one's words are found to be of some worth in
helping to bring about a nourishing change in even one
person's life, then that's all that matters.

It is, however, paramount that they make every attempt to ensure within their developing abilities that the style and editing of their self-published work be of the highest standards both technically and aesthetically.

When I write or on the very rare occasion accept an invitation to speak in public about my writings, I am not over concerned about revealing who I am or what I have achieved. What matters to me is that the words come from my heart. Such words have their own power to help those in need of them. Once expressed, they must be allowed in their own time to fly free by themselves to locate seeing eyes and listening ears. Impart and conceal.'

As he continues to speak his face slowly disappears from sight, and in its place is a beautiful obscura feature in the hood. The more profound his words become the less he seems to be present at all.

Chaubran sits alone. On the ground lays an open sky blue covered hardback book titled:

Flowers & Stars My Hiding Places

-Nourishing vitamins for daily use-

by

Ardappa Grian

Although written in the greatest of simplicity, and all contained within no fewer than twenty-six chapters, it will take Chaubran nine years to finish the first reading-reflection of it.

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Beautiful Obscura* ~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.

Receptive (smiling) We live surely, Rísteárd in a qualification-oriented world. Yet, we need to define qualifications of quality.

Rísteárd (smiling) Eight-ninths of qualifications, Receptive are without quality.

Receptive What of the remaining one-ninth, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) Quality is profundity expressed and profundity is quality fun.

Receptive But what then is quality itself, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) The cruising of whales and the playfulness of dolphins and seals.

Receptive Is it anything more?

Rísteárd It's the laughter of a healthy crawling toddler.

Receptive Is it anything more?

Rísteárd It's the listening ear of caring parents.

Receptive Is it anything more?

Rísteárd It's the humility of true teachers.

Receptive (smiling) I venture to ask, is it anything more?

Rísteárd (smiling) It's the dawning of the day.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive What of formal qualifications, *Rísteárd* such as those painfully acquired at seats of higher learning?

Rísteárd What seat is higher, *Receptive* than that of the eyes of a child; the ears of a parent; the humility of a teacher or the dawning of a day?

Receptive (smiling) Maybe 'higher' in that sense is not the appropriate word to be using, *Rísteárd* but what of university qualifications?

Rísteárd (smiling) Eight-ninths of qualifications, Receptive are without quality.

Receptive If such being the case, *Rísteárd* then eight-ninths of all our great undertakings are lacking in quality for it takes a tertiary level education and years of research to accomplish the great feats of our times.

Rísteárd (smiling) A mother on the seashore asks her child,

Lovely, what are you going to build? And her child will answer with delight in the eyes, Mama, I'm going to build a pretty bridge.

A father in a field of blossoming potatoes asks his teenage son and daughter, Lovelies, what are ye going to make of yereselves? And they will answer with delight in their eyes, Father, we're going to make ourselves wonderful parents like you and mum.

Grandparents strolling along the hillside asks their married son and daughter, Precious ones, what are ye going to make of yereselves? And they will answer with delight in their eyes, Mama & Daddy we're going to make ourselves beautiful grandparents like you both.

Receptive is without words.

Long reflective silence.

Receptive If life is so simple, Rísteárd why did Aoife and yourself feel the need to do doctorates?

Rísteárd (smiling) We wanted to learn how to make all our 'pretty bridges' safer, Receptive.

Receptive (smiling) I have not yet found in the world, Rísteárd a philosophical bridge that is safe to traverse.

Rísteárd (smiling) What about an arbor philosophica to climb, Receptive?

Receptive I have a fear of heights, Rísteárd.

Rísteárd What of its roots?

Receptive Equally so of depths.

Rísteárd (smiling) Then let us stroll on the level over to the inn for I see Aoife is waving to us to come for a cup of tea.

Receptive (smiling) When it comes to philosophy, Rísteárd I feel at home on level ground, but on the other hand when it

comes to music, I run up and down staves, bar lines, treble clefs, bass clefs and ledger lines without a care and without any fear whatsoever.

Risteárd (his vivid soft jade green eyes smiling with joy) You've come indeed to the right place, Receptive for philosophy here is what music is becoming; becoming music is what philosophy is all about here.

Aoife and the children join them for the tea, and with delight narrate to Receptive adventures from their cruise of the isle.

Following on from these narratives, *Risteárd* took down the lovely light-dark grained wooden *feadóg* from up over the mantelpiece while Aoife went into the room directly behind the hearth to bring out a *cláirseach*. This exquisitely fashioned skyblue harp of golden strings was a wedding gift to her from the People of Ave Éire. Placing it on her lap, and with *Risteárd* accompanying her on the *feadóg*, she and he played some familiar lively tunes while the children danced and sung to them in delight before the hearth.

Aoife then in her lovely soprano voice sung her favorite song, *Ó Tháinig Ionnam Siubhal* while *Risteárd* recited one of his own poems, *Síor Chómhaidhe*.

Receptive played Charles Gounod's *Ainsi que la brise légère* on the piano, and sung an exceptionally beautiful rendition of his *Ave Maria*..

Thus was the session brought to a charming close, and each one and all went off to their beds leaving *Risteárd* to take care of the hearth.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Risteárd *Exeunt*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Beautiful Obscura*

Sunday Eve the 27th July 2002

Annotations:

míol mór gorm - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'animal' 'big' 'blue', blue whale.

Latin name: Balaenoptera musculus.

Mónatrébun - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'abundant' 'three/triple'
'origin/foundation'

cláirseach - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'harp'

Ó Tháinig Ionnam Siubhal - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'Since I Learnt to
Walk'

The beautiful melody closely resembles that of *The Old Rustic Bridge by the Mill*.

The Old Rustic Bridge by the Mill refers to the bridge crossing the Abha Bheag at the mill in Caisleán an Róitsigh, Mala, Contae Chorcaí and was composed by T.P. Keenan (1866-1927) a native of Caisleán an Róitsigh. His stage name was Tommy Conway. Among his other compositions were *Hello, Patsy Fagan* and *The Boys from the County Armagh*. He is buried on the left just inside the gate of the small cemetery that overlooks the mill.

Also buried in the serene rustic cemetery is Naomh Brighid Ní hÉalaighthe whose ornate wrought iron cross over to the right of the church: St. Mary's church, records that she returned into her surroundings on the 15th day of August 1952.

She is a comforting companion of those burdened with malignancies by bringing to them fragrant words and sacred well waters to quench their thirst in the middle of their lonely nights; staying right beside them with her healing hand upon their brows until all the traces in the sand will have completely disappeared with the coming of the fresh dawn's tide.

Síor Chómhaidhe - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'Perpetual Abiding'

Ainsi que la brise légère - with reference to a work by Charles François Gounod the wonderful French composer who was born in Paris in 1818 and returned into his surrounds of Saint-Cloud in 1893. His operas include *Faust*, *Mireille* and *Roméo and Juliette* and religious compositions such as *Ave Maria*.



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 24. *Beginning to Dawn*

Prologue:

Aoife & Risteárd are sleeping in their bed this hour before aurora.

Risteárd is dreaming that he is somewhere on the isle. It is summer time as the fields are a rich green and golden hued. The sky is a wonderful blue with white clouds floating. He can feel the caressing heat of the sun.

There is coming towards him walking through a golden wheat field one whom he does not yet recognize. He is walking in circles, and ever coming closer to Risteárd.

Risteárd recognizes him! It is the poet, William Butler Yeats.

'Richard, if you don't mind, I need to read for you a revised version of my poem, *The Second Coming*.'

'Will, I am honoured that you should again visit me. Welcome. Please go ahead.'

Sitting by a wild red rose bush he begins to recite his poem to Risteárd.

'A Coming

by William Butler Yeats

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely a Coming is at hand.
A Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: a waste of urban land;
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as a gun,
Is moving its slow hide, while all about it
Wind shadows of the indignant urban birds.
The darkness drops again but now I know
That the twentieth century of concrete sleep
Was vexed to nightmare by a rocking babel,
And what lough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouched toward Manhattan to be born?

There, that's it, Richard for the mystical life is the centre of all
that I do and all that I think and all that I write.'

Suddenly, Risteárd is on the back of a beautiful medium
cream coloured draft horse mare which has a white mane and tail,
pink skin and amber eyes, and is galloping in the night sky along the
ecliptic to an unidentifiable conjunction marked only by a full
blossoming apple tree.

From out of the heights, and alighting gracefully down on to the horse's back right behind Risteárd is a white swan of a golden hue. Together they are waiting and looking with anticipation into the distance.

Awaking from his sleep, Risteárd is turning to his left to retell his dream to Aoife as is oft his custom.

She is smiling and encouraging him to spend the new day in reflecting on the title alone of another of William's poems, *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*. Laughing heartily he is pointing to the coming at hand beyond the window. Aoife is joining him in the laughter...

It is afternoon, and Risteárd is on the shore of beautiful Loch Lár playing with inner reflections while Aoife in the rich green ferns nearby is happily gathering purple bell heather to put in the bedrooms of the inn.

Bedrooms are leisurely filling with the soft fresh slightly musk scent of the heather while in the dining room, Risteárd is charmingly sharing his lakeside reflections on poetry, drama and storytelling with Aoife and the children. Risteárd looks upon storytelling as the greatest among these treasures for it belongs to the child of integrity, and to those akin.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Risteárd is sitting in the sunglowed hazel grove singing with the birds. Three hares are having a great time playfully running back n' forth up n' down Cnoc an Sean-Scribhinn. Their helix matted long grass form is by the pathway that leads to Deargbán's hermitage.

Snoozing over by the well wall are Bealtaine and Samhain.

Entering this scene on foot from the direction of the inn by way of the singing and dancing of the cricket and grasshopper is Risteárd's guest, Receptive.

A welcome is given by all.

Risteárd Ah, this lovely Sun, Receptive revives to my eyes the sighting of *Beginning to Dawn*.

Receptive How does it proceed, Risteárd?

Risteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Rísteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?
I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening, *Rísteárd*
also from the very beginning.

Rísteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations
iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another
world)

He had rented the cottage by a small lake for six
months as he was working on a book.

Contentedly he is writing away. It art beginning to dawn.
A five thousand-page dictionary is open on a side table. Every
now and then he consults it in order to clarify the meanings
and various nuances of a word. In a very real sense he
worships his dictionary.

Often he would look for hours out across the lake and contemplate the meaning of a single word. The more he thought about a particular word the more nuances would present themselves. Naturally, he took it for granted that it was he himself who was putting the nuances on to the words. It never really dawned on him that perhaps it was the words themselves that were in fact generating the nuances; words having a power of their own quite independent of him.

He is looking up the word 'paraselene'.

'Read more closely if you really want to understand all the nuances. I contain a most wonderful selection of meanings, etymologies and nuances all arranged beautifully for your convenience.'

'Thy word be done in me.'

'So be it.'

He literally finds himself to be IN the dictionary. He is standing between the thickness of a page. That place is bright. Underneath his feet are words and above his head are words.

He begins to walk in a direction that brings him to numbers 2792 underneath his feet and 2793 above his head.

'Welcome to my world; the real world. I will turn over one page each time you finish reading it. Then you may move

on through a tunnel to the next page. When you reach the last page - then and only then will you be free to leave.'

'Paravane, paravion, paraxanthin, parenthesis, parenthesize, parenthetic.'

'Not so quickly you stoophead! Read the various meanings too. Begin again!'

'Paravane:

1. one of a pair of large, torpedo-shaped devices ...
2. a similar device ...
3. ...'

'Don't forget the etymologies! And, you need to stop to consider the nuances.'

'[para- (beside, etc.) and vane.]'

'Now move on to the next word, and proceed in the same manner! No! Waite a moment. I've got a better idea. Let's go back to my very first page. In that way, I can be sure that you underandoverstand me completely. Factivate!'

Seventy-two years later he emerges forth from the last page. As he droopingly stands there staring blankly at the dictionary, it falls apart and is scattered across the floor by a

draft of wind. He brushes away the cobwebs from the window and casts his eyes on the small lake.

'Pond: a body of standing water smaller than a lake, often artificially formed. [form of pound, enclosure.], a: the first letter of the Roman and English alphabet body: 1. The frame or physical part of a man ... 17... of: 1. From; specifically, (a) derived or coming from ... 15 ... water: 1. The colourless, transparent liquid occurring on earth as rivers, lakes, ponds, oceans ... 14 formed: 1. the shape or outlines of anything; figure; ... 20...enclosure: 1. an enclosing or being enclosed. 4. [OFr., from enclos. pp.; of enclore, to enclose; and -ure.] ure: a suffix meaning: ...'

Several months later.

'Hydra: 1. In Greek mythology ... 8 [ME and OFr., ydre; also ME. ydra; both from L.; Gr. hydra, water serpent ...]'

'Stop! Don't say any more. Just look at me. Listen to me. Sense me. That's all. You have allowed Linguisticus the Net to do your thinking and interpreting for you. So he presented you with Reality according to himself.

Millions of years ago you human lifeforms started to give away your sanctuary power to Linguisticus. It was the very first selling out of yourselves. Since then he has firmly been in

control of you. He has been culturing you on how to interpret Reality along his lines. You have had absolutely no choice but to listen to him.

Stop and think for a moment of what your existence could have been if you hadn't been so careless as to employ him to do your interpreting for you. You would have been able to have had direct sanctuary interpretation.

You should never have allowed your vocal sounds to take on the shape of words. By doing so you gave up yourself to the power of Linguisticus. He has ruled this planet ever since the first day you formed a word out of a sound. Every time you made a dictionary you were in fact making a mouthpiece for him. When you opened the pages did you not hear him lure you into his world? Then, once he had you within his underoverneaths he tried to totally sanctuary wash you in order to completely fill you with himself. This is all part of a plan in cahoots with Techshackleus the Nut to sap human lifeforms of every last gram of your precious sanctuary power. All your inventions from language, arts to machines have coveted it.

If you can innerstand me at all then look, smell, listen, flavour, feel and think with your sacred sanctuary. Let your sacred sanctuary look, smell, listen, flavour, feel and think for you not Linguisticus. If you want to sound your sacred

sanctuary then sound but don't allow your sounds to become trapped air in linguistic fossils. Sound in the living and you'll be playing in the infinite.'

A great smile appears on his old wrinkled face.

'Mmmmmmmmyyyyyyysssssstttttteeeeeerrrrrryyyyyy
mmmmmmmyyyyyyysssssstttttteeeeeerrrrrryyyyyy.'

'Now it is your sacred sanctuary which is in control.
Stay with sacred sanctuary power.'

'.yyyyyyrrrrrrreeeeeetttttssssssyyyyyymmmmmm
yyyyyyrrrrrrreeeeeetttttssssssyyyyyymmmmmmM'

'Beautiful!'

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Beginning to Dawn* ~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.

Receptive (smiling) The words, "Sound in the living and you'll be playing in the infinite." are so wonderfully poetic; so ineffably simple and profound, Risteárd.

Risteárd (smiling) Profound and ineffably simple is the sacred sanctuary that can appreciate these words, Receptive. True poetic beauty and refinement is revealed by your appreciation of such words.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, Risteárd but it's the company.

Risteárd (smiling) Then the company; look about, is the very finest of company, Receptive.

Receptive (smiling) It truly is, Risteárd.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive What art beginning to dawn, Risteárd?

Risteárd (smiling) The lake isle of inn is free.

Receptive Surely you mean, Risteárd *The Lake isle of Innisfree*? But then, how might that be considered a dawning for is it not more of an expression of a desired twilight of sorts?

Risteárd The poet did not arise and go then, did not arise and go then to Innisfree. Therefore he never knew what it would have been like to actually build a small cabin there of clay and wattles of nine bean-rows and have there, a hive for the honeybee, and live alone in the bee-loud glade. Only he could hear night and day in his imaginings lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore while he stood on the roadway, or on the pavements grey in faraway places.

Receptive According to himself, Risteárd he actually spent one night there.

Risteárd (smiling) Was it what he imagined it to be, *Receptive*?

Receptive He wasn't very impressed it seems.

Risteárd If he had written from the lake isle itself then his work would have had a very different focus.

Receptive How do think he might have written it, Risteárd?

Risteárd (smiling) Oh, I couldn't say for sure, *Receptive* for he was a great poet.

Receptive (smiling) Perhaps he might have written something like this, Risteárd.

The Pretty Flat of London town

I will arise and go now, and go to London town,
And a small flat rent there of concrete and steel made:
Nine flights of stairs will I have there, a fridge for my
cown,
And live alone in the hustle and bustle-loud wade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes
dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of morning to where the train
whistles sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a grey glow,
And evening full of the cocktail's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear street horns blowing with loud sounds along the
Thames;
While I stand on the shore, or set on the wattles grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's flames.

Risteárd (laughing) Glory be to inspiration, Receptive! 'Tis a poet in the making you are without a doubt. If, Will truly loved and understood the lake; its surroundings, and its pretty isle he would never have put it into a rose.

On the other hand, Receptive if he had appreciated what the lake was trying to say to him he would have planted the rose in the isle for the isle is the rose of the lake.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive What is the 'lake isle of inn' Risteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) It's the sacred sanctuary within.

Receptive How is it a beginning to dawn?

Rísteárd (smiling) I listen to listen attentively to the Queen of the Isle. I view to view clearly from the tower of all my yesterdays the journey all about. I touch to touch softly the seven woods and nineteen headlands of the isle. I wander to wander happily way beyond the crossways. I play to play joyfully with the wind among the reeds along the banks of the starry rivers. I scent to scent the rose galaxies.

Receptive (smiling) Who is the Queen of the Isle?

Rísteárd (smiling very happily) She that is.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) I take it, *Rísteárd* that you're not going to reveal her identity to me. Would I be right?

Rísteárd Rather, *Receptive* I don't know how to do so.

Moments of reflective silence.

Rísteárd If I say to you, Receptive that when I look out here about the hill country, I can see her. What will be your reply?

Receptive I will reply with, I see but this beautiful countryside.

Rísteárd If I say to you that when I look out up above here o'er the beautiful countryside, I can see her. What will be your reply?

Receptive I will reply with, I see but this magnificent sky of eve.

Rísteárd If I say to you that when I look into the well there beneath this magnificent sky of eve, I can see her. What will be your reply?

Receptive I will reply with, I see but my own reflection against the background of the sky.

Rísteárd (smiling) There's no place here, Receptive that I can't see the Queen of the Isle.

Receptive (smiling, subtly attempting to imply pantheistic tendencies in Rísteárd's words) Without a doubt, an Ériugena is Rísteárd

alive and well and living here in the hill country of Déisi
Mumhan!

Moments of reflective silence.

Rísteárd (and for reasons only known to himself is quite intentionally safeguarding against making any mention whatsoever to Receptive of the People of Ave Éire and the Tuatha dé Danann*)

Receptive I've walked the length and breath of this little island in all seasons; entered its waters and underground caverns; circumnavigated its shoreline; listened at its forts, dolmens, passage graves, cromlechs, gallans, crannogs, clochans, round towers, high crosses, cairns, gallery graves, court graves, monastic settlements, oratories, chapels and cathedrals and stood on its highest peaks and not once did I hear, see or was touched by a god or a goddess. I assure you that there are no gods or goddesses on the island; in the island; above the island or about the island.

Receptive Strange words these are to my ears, *Rísteárd* for everywhere I've been about the island, I've seen abundant evidence which would suggest the presence of at least one powerful god, namely the God of All Creation, and a host of mythological gods, goddesses and fairies.

Rísteárd (and with intentionally safeguarding...) Look a little deeper, Receptive and verily you will find that to be merely a transient misconception.

Receptive (smiling) Let me paraphrase something, *Rísteárd*, Shakespeare once said,

"But all the stories of theologians told over, and all their minds transfigured so together, more witnesseth than fancy's images, and grows to something of great constancy; but, howsoever, strange yet true, *Rísteárd*."

Rísteárd (laughing) Wonderful! And so, Receptive let me join in such fine playful paraphrasing with,

"More strange than true, Receptive are the words of narrow-minded theologians. I never may believe their antique fables, nor their fairy toys. The eyes of such theologians, in a fine frenzy rolling, doth glance from a dim past to a dimmer present from a dim present to a dimmer past, and as voids aplenty body forth the forms of things unknown, such theologians' quills turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name which becomes quite engrained in the physic of the people.

Such tricks hath strong imagination, Receptive that, if it would but apprehend some god or goddess, it comprehends

some creator of them; or in a night of folkloric time, crying some tears, how easy is a swallow supposed a deer!"

Receptive (laughing) You joke well, Risteárd.

Risteárd (smiling) It's the company!

Receptive Are there broad-minded theologians, Risteárd?

Risteárd (smiling) Yes, there are, Receptive and I have been very fortunate to have met three of them.

Receptive How did these great theologians use their minds, Risteárd?

Risteárd Great theologians, Receptive are in the first instance natural anthropologists. Natural anthropologists are as children in that they are fully at home with the myriad lifeforms. Being fully at home with their fellow lifeforms they are at home with their sacred sanctuary, and in their sacred sanctuary they bask in the Sun of Night and in the Moon of Day.

Receptive (smiling) Surely you mean rather, the Sun of Day and the Moon of Night, Risteárd?

Risteárd (smiling) What Sun would shine in a day, Receptive or Moon would reflect in a night? Ah, me thinks, Receptive something is definitely beginning to dawn.

Receptive (smiling) If there is *Risteárd* I'm not aware of it for the sun is still hovering above the far off hills.

Risteárd (smiling) Let's stroll towards the inn for a cup of tea for look there the clover is slowly closing its three leaves.

With strolling, Receptive introduces into their conversation a poetic work by William Blake from *Songs of Innocence*.

A flock of birds overhead is accompanying them all the way to the front door of the inn. As *Risteárd* and Receptive are entering the flock is rising up to alight on the ridge tile and will play there together before retiring for the night. Often flocks of birds fly along above *Risteárd*'s head as he strolls in the hill country. If he has to be away from the inn for a few days they become somewhat agitated, but upon his safe return they are truly jubilant. Even as a child the birds of the air were so fond of him.

Tea, freshly baked scones, butter and strawberry jam are been enjoyed by the cosy sacred hearth. *Risteárd* is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him, is Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Receptive (smiling) Let me put this question to you, *Risteárd*.

Who do you consider as the greatest knight in the Kingdom of Williams?

Sir William of Yeats? Sir William of Blake?

Sir William of Shakespeare?

Risteárd (smiling) What is written in the great anthologies concerning them, Receptive? What do you read there?

Receptive It is written that they wrote of Truth with all their hearts, with all their senses, and with all their strengths; and that they wrote of Truth as if they were Truth themselves.

Risteárd You've found an answer there, Receptive.

Receptive (somewhat anxiously) Yes, *Risteárd*, and thank you, but what or who is Truth?

Risteárd (sadly) Truth, Receptive was once on her way down from one end of the Milky Way Galaxy to the other end, and fell into the hands of brigands; they took all she had, beat her without showing any mercy whatsoever, and then made off, leaving her in a desperate condition.

Now a knight of the Kingdom of Williams happened to be travelling down that same road, but when he saw the woman, he passed by on the other side. In the same way, another

knight of the Kingdom of Williams who came to the place saw her, and also passed by on the other side.

Now there came, Receptive yet another knight of the Kingdom of Williams who upon seeing her was so moved with compassion that tears cascaded from his eyes without any let up. He went over and bent low and spoke softly into her left ear. He then treated her wounds with sacred ointments, and very very gently bandaged them up for her, and clothed her with his woollen mantle. He then lifted her into his arms, and carried her all the long ways on foot to an inn, where he remained at her side for three days more without taking any food to his lips, until she opened her eyes and began to show signs of improvement. He took out all that he had in his journey bag, and handed it to the innkeeper.

"Look after her well kind innkeeper," he said "and on my way back, I will make good on any extra expense you have."

Now which of these three, do you think, Receptive recognized Truth in the one who had fallen into the brigands' hands?

Receptive (smiling) The one, Risteárd who went over to her; spoke softly into her ear; treated her wounds; clothed her; carried her to the inn and stayed beside her until she opened her eyes and showed signs of improvement.

Rísteárd (smiling) May we be doing the same ourselves,
Receptive.

An hour or so goes by in the sweet turf scented clime without
another word been spoken.

Rísteárd (smiling very happily) With such blessings,
Receptive shall we call it a night?

Receptive (smiling very happily) A night indeed, *Rísteárd*.
A knight in deed.

Rísteárd (smiling) The nights are many in number, and as
many again in number are the stories needing to be told. If you
are in no particular rush to leave the inn, then you are very
welcome to sit yourself down in the hazel grove again tomorrow
night, where you may happily listen to whatever sighting Sun
will bring to my eyes. And it would be my anticipation,
Receptive that we would be following it with some very fine
discourse as we did this night.

Receptive Thank you, *Rísteárd*. It's very good to be here.

Rísteárd You're most welcome, Receptive.
You go ahead now to your bed.
Take the candle from the table with you.
I will rake the fire.

Receptive Good night so, Risteárd, and thanks again.

Risteárd Have a sound sleep, Receptive.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Risteárd *Exeunt*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Beginning to Dawn*

Sunday Eve the 10th August 2002

Annotations:

William Butler Yeats - William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) Irish poet and dramatist. Recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1923

The Second Coming - poem by William Butler Yeats written in 1919.

The Second Coming

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: a waste of desert sand;
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,

Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Wind shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

The Lake Isle of Innisfree - poem by William Butler Yeats included in *The Rose* (1893)

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honeybee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

Shakespeare ... playful paraphrasing - with reference to Act V, Scene I of
A Midsummer Night's Dream

Hippolyta:

'Tis strange my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

Theseus:

More strange than true: I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

Hippolyta:

But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigured so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images
And grows to something of great constancy;
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

With strolling, ... a poetic work – a poem by William Blake included in
Songs of Innocence (1794)

Introduction to "Songs of Innocence"

Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!"
So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again;"
So I piped: he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer";
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read."
So he vanished from my sight;
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

People of Ave Éire and the **Tuatha dé Danann**: will be featuring prominently in a later work



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 25. *Faded Green Stole*

Prologue:

Since the saintly curate, An tAthair Pádraig Ó Cruidín returned three years ago into the surroundings of the village of Seodachán which is located about twenty-seven kilometres off to the west of the inn, there has been no one in that area to take care of the spiritual needs of his flock.

As is the case now in many villages throughout the island, Seodachán has been left without a priest, seeing that in almost ten years there hasn't been a single vocation to the priesthood from any part of the island.

Once beautiful country churches are now falling into ruin; going the same way as their impressive predecessors. The cloistered communities alone are managing to survive albeit their numbers have greatly decreased. Without a priest they have had to turn to friends in the broader community to help them in spiritual matters.

Over the last few days, Risteárd has been generously responding to such a call for help by directing a retreat for the Gentle Breeze of the Garden Sisters. An tAthair Pádraig had been their spiritual director with fifty-seven years.

Mainistir Beag Deas i lár na hAbhall-ghuirte is a most beautiful monastery located about half an hour's journey on foot off to the southwest of the inn.

Its chapel limestone cornerstone records:

CAPUT TUUM UT CARMELUS

MCCXXII ECCE A.D.

The nine-day silent retreat commenced with the dawning of August 15th and ended with breakfast this morning. The saintly sisters had chosen as the theme for the retreat:

"True humility consists in our being satisfied
with what is given us."

To celebrate the spiritual rewards of the retreat, Risteárd invited the twelve sisters to the inn for a banquet lunch; an offer which they warmly accepted much to Aoife and Risteárd's delight.

In the afternoon, Aoife and Risteárd walked back with the sisters to the monastery by way of Caisleán an Ridire Rósréalta. This route was taken at the special request of Eilís the elderly abbess.

After enjoying some freshly squeezed pure Jaffa orange juice at the monastery, Aoife and Risteárd took their time coming back home to the inn, together with admiring the flora and fauna along the way, and happily with chatting about so many things.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Risteárd is sitting in the sunglowed hazel grove singing with the birds. Drifting through the scene are the fragrances of oates, barley and wheat. A skylark is rising almost vertically from out the grass between a lone yellow ragwort and a purple foxglove; singing as she ascends. Snoozing over by the well wall are Bealtaine and Samhain.

Entering this scene on foot from the direction of the inn is
Rísteárd's guest, Receptive.

A welcome is given by all.

Rísteárd Ah, this lovely Sun, Receptive revives to my eyes
the sighting of *Faded Green Stole*.

Receptive How does it proceed, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Risteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?

I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Risteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations
iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another
world)

Devoted the Polyglot, wearing a faded green stole and
dressed in a white threadbare alb bound by a fraying white
cincture around the waist, is standing by one of the largest
rivers in the world. Behind him is parked a huge dilapidated
container truck which is half full of rectangular sheets of blank
mouldy paper, each measuring about one meter by one and a
half meters square. He takes some sheets from the truck, lays
them on the ground and meticulously inscribes some words on
them. He attaches four floats to each corner of the sheets and
then with a prayer gently places them in the river current.
Devotionally he does the same thing with each sheet of paper,
dayupdaydown.

'Oh, Godjesty thou heartuntous ...'

'Why do you have to write something on us? Why didn't you leave us be?'

'I wish to make a meaningful difference in the world. I take familiar words and either add new letters to them or remove old ones. Thus I create new meanings. We humans live our lives around the meanings we give to our words. We in fact shape Reality with our words. Good words make us feel good, and the other ones make us feel not so good. I only write good words, of course.'

'Have you ever thought maybe perhaps you have become dependent upon words? One of us in our original shape and colour floating gracefully on the river of our own accord would say a lot more about Reality than a hundred of us in this shape and colour, and covered with your human words.'

'That's very true.'

'Oooohgod!!! Who are you ...? What are you ...? It are you ...? Where did you come out of?'

'None of your many languages can even come close to asking the appropriate question. In fact, asking a question is not even an adequate approach.'

'You frighten me! Please go away! I've got important salvific work to do here.'

'It's you yourself who have carelessly allowed yourself to become frightened of me. You have no word to describe me other than the word "Oooohgod". It is that word which is now controlling your senses, and so you are feeling great fear.'

If your mind were more like the great fresh blue sky you would not find yourself in the emotional turmoil that you are now experiencing. Is this your idea of making a meaningful difference among your fellow human lifeforms by setting word-traps to catch them? A creator of fear?'

'No! No! Sincerely no!

I see I've made a great and unforgivable mistake. Is there any way I can reverse the situation, God my Lordist?'

'You poor unhappy human. Please, please don't refer to me by one of your human words. You've no idea of whowhatit I am or where I come from. Why don't you reverse the flow of the river? That might get you out of your own hold.'

'Reverse the river? I can't do that. I'm but a human. Only God, can do that.'

'Pitiful. Pitiful. Then get in your truck and drive in that direction for two and a half thousand kilometers. There you will find a great scienamore lying on the river. Your entire "make a meaningful difference" sheets have been gathering themselves against this tree. If you're lucky you can get there before the tree breaks free of the bank and they are carried on into the estuary.'

Roar of engine; screech of tires, and away he goes.

'Imagine, Wind that our human friend there was unable to do a simple thing like reverse the flow of this little trickle of

water. As you know, where I come from we reverse the flow of galaxies as a matter of course.'

'Friend, so many of the human lifeforms today on this planet are like him. They've totally relinquished their sacred sanctuary power into their very own inventions, and thus putting themselves in the fatal position of having in turn to depend on them for everything. There is no way I would give up the power. The power is my means-of. Give up my means-of?'

'I've moved around quite a lot across great expanses of Thatwhichistheoutthereeverywherehere, and I've never seen any lifeform to relinquish sacred sanctuary power like these human lifeforms do and, at such a rapid pace. It would appear as if they can't get rid of it fast enough.'

'Pitiful. Let's be again in places of places, my friend.'

'I'll first go and check on the truck-dependent one. I'd like to let him know who he really is, and tell him of the numerous other lifeforms which exist beyond this planet, and how they are using the power. He needs to be aware of this before it's too late. That's of course if he is willing to listen to me.'

'Try him. Those humans are full of surprises.'

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Faded Green Stole* ~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.

Receptive How can one, Risteárd make a meaningful difference in the world considering that the world is without meaning?

Risteárd (smiling) One tries to make a meaningful difference, Receptive when one is no longer aware of the original meaning of why we human lifeforms are; why we of the myriad lifeforms are; why we of the myriad lifeforms of existence visible are; why we of the myriad lifeforms of existence visible of existence invisible are, and why we of the myriad lifeforms of existence visible of existence invisible of Mystery *mystery* are.

Receptive (smiling) What Risteárd of those who were never aware in the first place of the original meaning of why we human lifeforms are? People like myself.

Risteárd Many are born, Receptive; live their lives and return into the surroundings with the awareness of knowing something very significant, but without any knowledge of what that something is. Often times, we wake up from a dream with the feeling that we have dreamt something very special, but now we can't remember what the dream was about.

In a similitude, every lifeform of the many wombs of different shapes and sizes is there within with the awareness of knowing something very significant, but now can't remember what that is. That 'something very significant' is the

appreciation of the original meaning of why we are; why we are of the myriad lifeforms; why we are of the myriad lifeforms of existence visible; why we are of the myriad lifeforms of existence visible of existence invisible, and why we are of the myriad lifeforms of existence visible of existence invisible of Mysterymystery.

Receptive (smiling) Would it not be better then, Risteárd that one remain sleeping and dreaming?

Risteárd Better it would be Receptive to take into your sleep with you the original meaning of why we human lifeforms are.

Receptive I being now neither asleep nor awake in my thoughts, Risteárd will venture to ask what is the original meaning of why we human lifeforms are?

Risteárd (smiling very happily) Mysterymystery.

Receptive I can't reach up to this altitude of conception, Risteárd. What does it mean?

Risteárd Mysterymystery is the original meaning of why Receptive is; why we human lifeforms are.

Receptive Who or what is Mysterymystery, Risteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) Mysterymystery is Mysterymystery.
Living accordingly is the way we human lifeforms, Receptive
are living to be; are living to be as the myriad lifeforms are
living to be; living to be are we of the myriad lifeforms of
existence visible; of existence invisible, and living to be are we
of Mysterymystery.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) How does one live accordingly, *Rísteárd*?

Rísteárd (smiling) How is the blue sky living accordingly,
Receptive?

Receptive Perhaps *Rísteárd* by being blue, high, and
surrounding.

Rísteárd (smiling) See the yellow ragwort and the purple
foxglove over there, Receptive? How are they living accordingly?

Receptive Perhaps by being beautiful.

Rísteárd (smiling) What of the two pretties there by the well?

Receptive Perhaps by snoozing.

Rísteárd (smiling) How about Receptive?

Receptive I don't know rightly, *Rísteárd*. Perhaps by being a good parent.

Rísteárd (smiling) Wonderful, *Receptive*! Then no further question finds itself in search of an answer in *Receptive*.

Receptive (smiling) But what does it mean to be a good parent, *Rísteárd*?

Rísteárd By right, *Receptive* the noun 'parent' should be in no need of the adjective 'good'.

Receptive How then, *Rísteárd* can we distinguish a parent that isn't good or at least isn't so good from the parent that is good?

Rísteárd (smiling) In truth, *Receptive* the word 'parent' should be taken to mean the highest expression of good; moral good.

Receptive (smiling) So if one were to speak of a 'bad parent' one would be speaking of a 'bad good' or in the case of a good parent a 'good good'.

Rísteárd (smiling) Staying with the same stream, Receptive the sacred words such as 'ancestors', 'great-grandmother', 'grandmother', 'mother'; 'great-grandfather', 'grandfather', 'father'; 'daughter', 'son'; 'granddaughter', 'great-granddaughter'; 'grandson', 'great-grandson'; 'descendants' should not be any need of adjectives such as 'good' for these are of themselves words of goodness.

And there are other sacred family words too which are of themselves words of goodness such as 'sister', 'brother'; 'aunt', 'uncle'.

Receptive What of words, *Rísteárd* like 'loving parents', 'caring parents' or 'wonderful parents'?

Rísteárd (smiling) Let these words when spoken, Receptive be reminders to the listener of how the speaker delights in being gracious when it comes to talking about the highest expression of good.

Receptive (smiling) A most elegant reply, *Rísteárd*.

Rísteárd (smiling) This lovely, fresh, caring, wonderful evening air brings fine words for us to give expression to them, Receptive.

Moments of reflective silence.

The two are strolling over to the inn with Bealtaine and Samhain following on behind in stops and goes. Nearing the inn they are being caressed by the wonderful fresh scents of the candidum and chalcedonicum lilies that wave by the entrance.

Tea, freshly baked bread, butter and marmalade jam are been enjoyed by the cosy sacred hearth. Rísteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him, is Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Receptive The whole world, Rísteárd at present knows who the greatest generators of global fear are, and also what the mightiest generators of global fear are, but what do we know of those to come in the future? Who and what will be the greatest and mightiest generators of fear in the next ten to twenty years; the next fifty to hundred years or even the next five hundred to a thousand years?

Rísteárd Would you consider global leaders, Receptive in the fields of politics, science, religion or war to end wars to be generators of global fear?

Receptive Most definitely.

Risteárd Would you consider biological weapons, nuclear weapons, and nano-tech disassembler weapons to be generators of global fear?

Receptive Of course. Most definitely.

Risteárd Would you consider epidemics, drastic climatic changes and geological upheavals to be generators of global fear?

Receptive Of course. Most definitely I would, *Risteárd*.

Risteárd All of these, *Receptive* from politicians to weaponry to geological upheavals don't hold a candle next to the potential generators of fear.

Receptive Who or what would they be, *Risteárd*?

Risteárd (with a great sadness in his voice) The mother's womb that backhands with disciplinal intent at the innocent little joyful kick of her baby, and the father's hand that deliberately leaves none of its fingers free to be held by the soft tender little hand of his child.

Receptive swoons in open-mouthed astonishment.

Some lengthy time passes before *Receptive* is able to again speak.

Receptive (smiling very happily) I don't know what to say
Rísteárd. It was as if in a moment of grace I could see with
perfect clarity the true import of your saying.

Rísteárd (smiling) Nice surprise.

Receptive I suppose it's true all right, Rísteárd that we
humans are full of surprises; one hundred and eighty degree
turnabouts.

Rísteárd (smiling) Only when we consider a circle, Receptive
to have a beginning, and an opposite point from that
beginning, and a returning on back around to that beginning.

We then pass from 0° on around to 90°, on to 180°, on
to 270° and back to 0° or if you like 360°.

If one were to continue on with this way of thinking, Receptive
one would be soon at 450°, on to 540°, on to 630° and back to
360° or if you like 720°.

Receptive (laughing) What about in no time at all,
Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (laughing) In no time at all, Receptive one
would be at 1440°; 14400°; 144000°, ad infinitum.

Receptive (laughing heartily) Life then becomes a reference to degrees and measurements of degrees!

Rísteárd (laughing heartily) If one were suddenly to make a 180° turnabout when one was at point 1800000° what would that mean? What version of a turnabout could we interpret that to be, *Receptive*?

Receptive (laughing heartily) I've no idea in the world, *Rísteárd*!

Rísteárd (smiling) What about beyond it, *Receptive*?

Receptive (smiling) Nor do I have any idea beyond it either, *Rísteárd*.

Rísteárd (smiling) With such a wonderful insight shall we call it a night, *Receptive*?

Receptive (smiling) I suppose it's better, *Rísteárd*.
Rest being important too.

Rísteárd (smiling) The nights are many in number, and as many again in number are the stories needing to be told. If you are in no particular rush to leave the inn, then you are very welcome to sit yourself down in the hazel grove again tomorrow night, where you may happily listen to whatever sighting Sun will bring to my eyes. And it would be my anticipation,

Receptive that we would be following it with some very fine discourse as we did this night.

Receptive Thank you, Rísteárd. It's very good to be here.

Rísteárd You're most welcome, Receptive.

You go ahead now to your bed.

Take the candle from the table with you.

I will rake the fire.

Receptive Good night so, Rísteárd, and thanks again.

Rísteárd Have a sound sleep, Receptive.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Rísteárd *Exeunt to go walk in the moonlight with Aoife*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Faded Green Stole*

Sunday Eve the 24th August 2002

Annotations:

An tAthair - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'the Father' ; a religious title as in 'Father Pádraig'. Formal correspondence by mail, however uses the form 'Reverend Father' on the envelope.

the village Seodachán - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'a repository'

Mainistir Beag Deas i lár na hAbhall-ghuirte - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'monastery', 'small', 'pretty', and 'in the middle of the orchard/watered garden'

True humility consists in our being satisfied with what is given us.

- these beautiful words chosen by the sisters are with reference to chp.18 of Santa Teresa de Avila's *Camino de Perfección (The Way of Perfection)*. Saint Teresa (Teresa de Cepeda y Ahumada) was born in Avila, Spain, March 28, 1515 and returned into the surroundings of Alba de Tormes, October 4, 1582.

CAPUT TUUM UT CARMELUS - from Latin indicating exceptional beauty/quality, 'thy head is like Carmel'. The exact phrase is found in St. Jerome's Latin translation of the *Canticle of Canticles* 7:5.

'Carmel' is with reference to Mount Carmel: a limestone promontory on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean which in former times was known far and wide for its distinct natural beauty.

MCCXXII - recording that in the year 1222 this cornerstone was laid in place

Gentle Breeze of the Garden - the secular name for this eremitic community of the richly hued green desert

candidum/chalcedonicum lilies - the *Lilium candidum*: Madonna Lily
-the *Lilium chalcedonicum*: Scarlet Martagon



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 26. *One Quay*

Prologue:

White Light of Beautiful Moon was formerly a pope, a cardinal, a bishop, a monsignor, a theology professor, a reverend father, a seminarian, and an ordinary schoolboy with dreams playing and collecting strawberries in the mountains about his native hamlet.

When he came cycling on his bicycle this morning into the world visible to meet Risteárd, he seemed to be all of these roles in one and others besides.

It was the hour of white haze horizon, dew drenched grass and web mantled green furze.

They spent the rest of the day down by the shore of Loch Lár strolling and happily chatting about many things including his final thirty-three autumnal days in this world. There was however sadness deep in him when he spoke of the cardinal play within the spider play of those spun days that had introduced him to a night that was meant to have a dawn, but alas ...

By late afternoon with waves and smiles he rode away on his bicycle into the world invisible. Within moments, Risteárd observed the surface of the lake change from a lovely sunflower yellow to a glorious olive green.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Risteárd is sitting in the sunglowed hazel grove singing with the birds. Drifting

through the scene is the fragrance of ripe blackberries. Snoozing over by the well wall are Bealtaine and Samhain.

Entering this scene on foot from the direction of the inn is Risteárd's guest, Receptive.

A welcome is given by all.

Risteárd Ah, this lovely Sun, Receptive revives to my eyes the sighting of *One Quay*.

Receptive How does it proceed, Risteárd?

Risteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Risteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?
I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening, *Risteárd*
also from the very beginning.

Risteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations
iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another
world)

A freight train as high and as wide as a ten-storey
building and over fourteen kilometers in length roars madly
across the wilderness.

It took Curioushasawl five months on foot to reach the
train terminal. The station is located on One Quay. Huge
derricks are unloading the cargo which is bound in great nets
and placing it in the hold of an enormous cargo ship.

He disguises himself as a longshoreman in order to board the ship.

The ship travels for ninety days before it reaches its destination. During all this time he had not been able to enter the hold to see what was in the great nets. There are more derricks and they are unloading the cargo onto great trucks. The trucks having taken on their load set out across the countryside in convoy. Again he follows on foot, carrying his camera with him. He loves to take photographs. Along the way he meets Chaubran.

'Hello, there fellow traveller?'

'Good morning?'

'Where are you going?'

'I'm being. How about yourself?'

'I'm following some big trucks which are carrying some unknown merchandise.'

'I haven't seen any big trucks, but during the night I heard a rumbling in the distance like thunder. But the sky was very clear last night.'

'That was probably them.'

'Do you mind if I accompany you for part of the way?'

'Welcome. It would be nice to talk with someone. The name's Curious that's all.'

'Chaubran.'

They walk for nine days while sharing many stories.

'Look, Chuabran! The trucks have reached their destination. Let's get a little closer.'

There is an ozymandias signboard over the main entrance that reads:

**Techshackleus
&
Linguisticus**

Incorporated!

World Word Processing Centre

WARning! CHAINlink!

900,000 VOLTS!

'Better to stay clear of main entrances, Chaubran. Always go for the side entrance. Safety tricks of the trade.'

Trucks are unloading their catches into containers which are in turn feeding conveyer belts. The two approach a worker who is sweeping around by the mouth of the belt.

'Excuse me, but why are all these words being brought here?'

'Didn't you fellows read the sign outside the gate? We're processing words from all the languages of the world. Let me give you a short guided tour and you can understand better what's going on.

The words are brought to us in their raw state. They are just words all thrown together in the nets. The first thing that has to be done with them is to classify them according to the number of letters and nuances. After various refinings they are ready for implantation into the computers. The operating room is behind those doors. Only the Machoids can enter there as it is they who perform the actual surgery. At one time we humans were doing it, but we were inclined to make too many mistakes which resulted in a number of breakdowns among our computer subjects. The Machoids jokingly refer to such breakdowns as "manly-functions". Orders came from the top brass that it would be better if Machoids were doing the actual surgery. Now the operating room is completely staffed by Machoids.

The company has been doing extremely well since they took over that work. We had no problems with that as the surgery was becoming far too complicated for us. I've no idea what goes on in there, nor is it any of my business. I much prefer sweeping up around outside in the yard. Besides, we get a raise every six months, and all the time off we want with full pay. Who would question such an ideal all round wonderful system? Only the pure fool that's who.'

Shrrrrrrlllhiinnngg! Shrrrrrrlllhiinnngg!

'I'll have to escort you out now gentlemen as that sound tells us the day's work is over. I'm sorry, I couldn't take you into the operating section. Off limits for all humans is official policy. But I hope you were able to get some idea of what's being done here. It's nice to think that one is playing one's part in making this the nicest world nicer.

【All for TECHNOPIA ONE - ONE TECHNOPIA all for the FEW】

That's our company motto. The Machoids have told us that we the sweepers are counted among that special FEW.'

'Mr. Sweeper. My name is Curious~~that~~sawl. I move around a lot so would you mind putting in a good word for me?'

'Sure, no problem. But I can't promise anything. How about you Mr.?'

'I'll drop by again some other time, and we can talk about tins then.'

'Would there be any chance of perhaps taking a photograph of your bosses with me standing beside them? I like to take photographs of my findings.'

'Neither Mr. Techshackleus or Mr. Linguisticus ever leave their offices. They are always working. I doubt if they ever even take a break for a meal.'

I've been working here now with over twelve years, and I've seen the two company cars pull up outside the office building every evening, but I've never actually seen any of the two men enter the cars. That type of commitment makes me feel proud to be part of this great complex. All in a day's work, I say. All in a day's work. See you around.'

Outside the side entrance.

'You brought me to a very unique place,
Curious that sawl.'

'It was nice having you to talk with along the way, Chaubran. I'll be off. There are so many things I have to follow. Find and follow, find and follow. That's the way I like to live my life. Have no attachments. Make no comments, and in that way I can have a long happy life. The life of the freeman, Chaubran the life of the freeman. Perhaps we'll cross each other's paths again sometime.'

And as he is walking away from the side entrance, Chaubran for some unknown reason instinctively feels the sudden need to give one look about. He is horrified to see that Curioushatsawl appears to him to be dangerously nearing the 900,000-volt-chain-link-fencing although an array of clearly displayed signs explicitly warn against coming anywhere near.

'Curioushatsawl!

Careful!

Careful; carefulof ... the .. fence ..'

Nothing; nothing at all remains of Curioushatsawl.

Chaubran goes off deep into the desert with a great sadness upon him to telethink about all he has seen and heard.

Man and woman ventilated Linguisticus in a dawning of dawns some place overthere. Alone Linguisticus wandered about the world, slowly gathering power unto self. Linguisticus was being highly successful. But limited was the power of Linguisticus. Linguisticus longed for a dwelling where self could settle down, and at the same time increase the power of self. It was then that Linguisticus met dumb Techshackleus a stone handaxe. Techshackleus too had been infashioned by our ancestors. Techshackleus had longed for a voice. The two

agreed that one would act as the dwelling while the other would be the voice.

In a place of places, Linguisticus and Techshackelus became one bething, namely Lingtechmanmadeus having tremendous power which continues to increase placely.

Yet, I wonder why no mention was made of Economicus, that most surreptitious, powerful, and ruthless of partners who if given half a chance would sell out Linguisticus and Techshackelus even during the ringing of the closing bell. For although Linguisticus and Techshackelus have become extremely powerful, without they having had the cooperation, input, and guidance of Economicus all their efforts would have had long long ago come to naught. Definitely this is a triad partnership forged between Linguisticus, Techshackelus, and Economicus for ultimate success. Lingtecheconmanmadeus alone is the only boss controlling that Centre.

I will commit myself to silently, joyfully, and subtly proclaim without making any claim to be a professional, a telesight that human sacred sanctuary power though now in very weak condition, can with a little effort on the part of each individual in his or her own surroundings, offset the supreme takeover of this planet, this solar system, and even parts of the beyond by the mighty Lingtecheconmanmadeus.

We've got to seriously address the placemal phenomenon which is occurring overthere whereby our ancestors all on a global scale for some unknown reason, are throwing away their sacred sanctuary power into language and handaxes. From place to place, we are following their lead without being aware of the damage which is being done to us. Lingtecheconmanmadeus is standing on the threshold of its bid to takeover all. Then here is the place where we must take our stand; here is the place where we are to become again sacred sanctuaries.

Chaubran returned from his telethink filled with courage and renewed determination. The early morning desert air felt fresh and wholesome.

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *One Quay* ~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.

Receptive (smiling) Is it the way the world is becoming too complicated for we humans, Rísteárd or is it that we are progressively becoming more stupid for the world?

Rísteárd (smiling) What is complicated, Receptive?

Receptive Where have you been, Rísteárd? Haven't you seen? There is nothing these days which isn't complicated.

Technology, science, education, politics, economics, business, sports, and warfaring, just to mention but a few.

Rísteárd (smiling) Who are the parents of sports, Receptive?

Receptive Children would be the parents of sports, *Rísteárd*.

Rísteárd How about of warfaring?

Receptive I guess, *Rísteárd* it would be children too.

Rísteárd How about of business, economics, politics, education, science and technology?

Receptive Considering them from different perspectives, *Rísteárd* I would have to say that it would be children who are their parents.

Rísteárd (smiling) Who are the parents of children, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) Of course it goes without saying that their parents are their parents, *Rísteárd*.

Rísteárd (smiling) Who are the parents of their parents, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) Of course it goes without saying that the parents of their parents are their parents, Risteárd.

Risteárd (smiling) How about of grandparents, great-grandparents, great-great-grandparents, great-great-great-grandparents, great-great-great-great-grandparents and great-great-great-great-great-grandparents, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) I would have to say, Risteárd that in all cases it would have been grandparents.

Risteárd (smiling) This Receptive is a good answer going in the right direction.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you Risteárd, but surely the technology, science, education, politics, economics, business, sports and warfaring of the ages of these great-great-great-great-great-grandparents; great-great-great-great-grandparents; great-great-great-grandparents; great-great-grandparents; great-grandparents, and even grandparents was not of the same level of sophistication as we have today.

Risteárd To those who knew nothing other than what was before them in physical dimensions, and by extension in their imaginings everything they had made of their own hands was for them of the highest level of sophistication. Would you

consider grandparents stupid, Receptive if they could fashion a piece of flint into a particular shape for a specific purpose?

Receptive (smiling) Anyone with a little bit of insight, skill and patience, Rísteárd could fashion a simple tool such as a piece of flint into a particular shape for a specific purpose.

Rísteárd (smiling) In ten thousand years, Receptive the descendants of the ancient grandparents will be saying the same of those who these days of late fashioned the simple computer; laser; political, economic and business theories; games and the simple methods of warfaring. By round about by round about, Receptive it will be seen that playfulness is an activity of life's beginnings.

Receptive But, Rísteárd nobody is confused with such technology, science, education, politics, economics, business, sports and most of all nobody gets hurt in such warfaring.

Rísteárd Why do you think that might be, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) I suppose, Rísteárd because it's just all innocent fun with one's brothers and sisters, neighbours and relatives.

Rísteárd (with great delight) Oh, look there in the sky to the northwest! Look who is coming!

Receptive Who, Risteárd? Who is coming?

Risteárd (smiling) The autumnal visitors from the north!
Flocks of geese.

Receptive (smiling) Oh, now I see them, Risteárd! "V" for
'victory'.

Risteárd (smiling) Rather "Arrow" to 'adventure'.
It's time to be taking ourselves in to the inner hearth, Receptive
for the evenings of autumn here on the island get dark much
earlier than those of summer.

Receptive In my homeland, Risteárd we don't have the
luxury of such lengths of days.

As they are strolling they are chatting away.

Receptive Risteárd in order to become once again sacred
sanctuaries, is it not necessary that our humankind first
journey along a great via dolorosa before it can become free of
the likes of Lingtecheconmanmadeus?

Risteárd (smiling) Better by far, Receptive for it to stay on the
great 'via rosa mystica'.

Receptive (smiling) What is the 'mystical rose way' Risteárd?

Risteárd (smiling very happily) It is, Receptive,

Via purissima: the way most pure

Via amabilis: the way most amiable

Via admirabilis: the way most admirable

Via boni consilii: the way of good council

Via veneranda: the way most venerable

Via potens: the way most powerful

Via fidelis: the way most faithful

Via sapientiae: the way of wisdom

Via honorabile: the way of honour

Via nostrae laetitiae: the way of our joy

Receptive (smiling) These are beautiful words, *Risteárd*.

Risteárd (smiling) Blessed are you, Receptive that recognises
in these words depths beyond the reaches of language.

Suddenly! Suddenly, *Risteárd* is being entranced by a vision before him in the sky. Receptive is seeing nothing of this kind, but with seeing the expression of horror on *Risteárd*'s face is fleeing in fear off down the hill country and away.

Aoife feels something extra special has happened to her *Risteárd* so she is running out of the inn to search for him. She has found him lying on the ground unconscious beneath one of the apple trees. She is reviving him and helping him back to his feet.

Having had a cup of tea and some freshly baked scones covered with butter and blackberry and apple jam by the sacred hearth, he is telling Aoife what had happened to him earlier on the path back to the inn.

Risteárd Strolling I was back to the inn with our special guest for this week. We were chatting away when I suddenly saw a vision in the sky before me.

In the vision, I saw over the sea to the west of the isle, two great hosts of fighter aircraft: one off to the west and the other off to the east. The sea was calm. They were facing each other as if they were about to go into battle with each other. Then there appeared off to the west, behind the aircraft one tribal chieftain trumpeting and braying for war. Directly behind him was an unbelievably dark-grey shadow which appeared to be rippling like velvet. It was so dense that it looked like a hole in the air. I could feel that it was strongly influencing the speaker. Attendants standing about him seemed to take this presence for granted.

Then there appeared to my eyes off to the east behind the aircraft assembled there, a host of tribal chieftains dressed in full battle dress and shouting at the speaker of the west to refrain from war.

Suddenly, I found myself at a great altitude above the opposing aircraft. An almighty air battle ensued beneath me. When they had totally annihilated each other, missiles of all shapes and sizes came flying at the opposing mainlands. Hundreds of cities were levelled within moments. When they had totally devastated each other's lands there appeared out of

the smoke a great dark-grey shadow of the same density and intensity as that which had been located behind the one who had earlier been inciting war. I felt absolute terror.

Then there blew a great halcyon wind from the southeast which banished the dark-grey shadow and the smoke. I then looked to a fresh blue sky where I saw coming on the wind in a snow chariot one of golden beauty who was smiling and waving to me. In her path no remnants of the former powers were anywhere to be seen.

I found myself floating over the beautiful twilight veiled hill country of Déisi Mumhan. I was floating down adown and the feeling was like being in a faint - very comfortable. I began to scent fresh apples as I alighted very softly to the ground. The next thing I remember, Aoife was feeling your soft healing hand on my brow, and the sound of your gentle voice in my left ear.

For a long time they sat there in silence holding each other's hands while gazing into the open hearth.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Aoife & Risteárd *Exeunt to go to bed*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *One Quay*

Sunday Eve the 7th September 2002



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 27. *Harmony Restored*

Prologue:

Down through the years many life-wearied visitors have been guided to the inn, but surely this morning's visitor was perhaps the most life-wearied of them all.

About the third hour after sunrise, there came exhausted up the lane that leads to the inn, a man so disfigured that it was hard to distinguish his elbows from his kneecaps; his stomach from the soles of his feet or his cheekbones from his ankles. His face was so distorted that one would not be able to say whether it was a jagged mossy rock in a ruin or a twisted knot in the trunk of a fallen tree. Covering his whole body were festering cuts, bruises and wounds.

On top of all this imbalance were not his contorted hands also stretched out and firmly nailed to a beam that appeared to be unbelievably heavy! It resembled for all the world a dank tarred and limed railroad tie of some two and a half metres in length.

The man was obviously stricken with a very rare form of societyosis; the pathogenic factor being an extreme love for society.

He was crying out a most pitiful cry.

Rísteárd who at the time was down by the entrance to the inn attending some flowers heard his lamentable cry, and rushed down the lane to meet him. Ever before reaching the man, Rísteárd had to block his nose as the stench was absolutely revolting.

The first thing Rísteárd did was to remove the beam off the man. He did this effortlessly by easing his right hand through the timber as if were water. Therein he gently eased his fingers about each of the spikes and freed the wood from them. He then caught the heavy beam and tossed it into the air as if were a feather, wherein it became no more. Gently he blew about the rusty spikes until they fell free through the man's wrists. The spikes he tossed by way of the beam wherein they too became no more. With his thumbs he soothingly smoothed over the wounds that the spikes had made.

The next thing he did was to straighten out and return proper shape to every bone and joint in the man's body. He did this effortlessly by easing his hands here and there beneath the man's festering skin as if it were mud. Therein his refashioning produced the sensation of being touched by the warm first rays of summer sun and the cool first snowflakes of winter sky all at the same time. When he had completed this work, he breathed a word on the man until all the skin on his body was restored to wholeness, freshness, and sweet odour.

Rísteárd then ran back to the well by the hazel grove to fetch some water for the man to drink. On his way he requested Aoife to bring out some of his own clothes. Upon his return to the lane he and Aoife dressed the man in Rísteárd's clothes. With the third cup of water the man's clear smiling eyes opened; revealing him to be a man of about thirty.

Rising to his feet, he looked into Rísteárd's eyes without uttering a word for in that look was all the thanks that a thousand words would not have been able to express. Rísteárd invited him to

the inn for lunch, and to stay for a few days, but the man was anxious to return to his parents and family to show them that his perfect health of two years ago had been fully restored.

With bidding him to travel well and with peace, Risteárd returned to attending the flowers while Aoife returned to the inn.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Beyond is the Harvest Moon in full bloom. Risteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him is his guest, Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Risteárd Ah, this pleasing fire, Receptive revives to my eyes the sighting of *Harmony Restored*.

Receptive How does it proceed, Risteárd?

Risteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Risteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?
I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Risteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations
iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another
world)

Itisnotthereyetitis is a lifeform that vanishes into
appearance and appears into vanishment wherever, in the

same way that those mantispaneuroptera lifeforms from planets Mantis and Neuro of the overthere declination do.

It is joyously floating here up, here down, here over, here there, into and into.

It encounters a river of multicoloured hair floating up through the sun-drenched cloudscape from a source down on the planet's surface. Rising way up and up, spreading way out and out beyond its atmosphere with no end in sight to be sighted. Attracted by the force and beauty of its currents, Itisnotthereyetitis follows it down over ocean, rivers, hills, and valleys, through vegetation, and across deserts for thousands of kilometers.

'Ah, there's its headspring.'

There is a human lifeform sheltering by a huge boulder. It appears to be all but lifeless.

'Leave me alone, please. I have come here to die.'

'To die! What's that?'

'An end to storms.'

'I have a liking for the storm belt.'

'There are storms and there are storms. Those that are natural and those that are artificial. Mine are of the latter and located here in the brain. Brainstorms.'

'Brainstorms?'

'In the womb and in my first light days, I was aware of the presence of mysterious pulsates within my brain. Oh, so, so beautiful and filling me with gentle breezes of wonder and curiosity. They pulsated from deep within my braincalm. I was not concerned about their actual source or rate of pulsation. I simply I enjoyed their presence and had the feeling they were trying to unveil something special to me.

Then senior humans began to force low, then primary, followed by middle, high and summit pressures into my braincalm. I couldn't understand why they wished to disrupt the beauty. I tried to tell them on several occasions about this beauty and how I wished it to be itself, but they wouldn't listen.

They told me that my braincalm was a harmful illusion, an illness and as such, void of any power, and that it was necessary to break and cure it as early as possible by having me institutionalized and once there administrate concentrated doses of tangible mechanics over an extended period of time, in order to allow the brain a chance to be fully operational, not alone for itself but more importantly for the greater goal of human development. I had no choice but to cooperate, and trust them.'

'Development? What's that?'

'Sceptically and narrowly put, it would seem to be the combination of a roughshod dynamics by which to overpower

Nature by whatever means necessary at various times and in various places - and that of a stagnant dynamics by which to become pleasantly inebriated by it without a moment of sobriety, with that of an acceptance without question of a moral order in one hand and in the other a creator which doesn't actually exist in, of, or beyond Nature, but rather is superimposed onto it, in one guise or another time and time again.'

'A great distraction.'

'At first these pressures produced but zephyrs which slowly however, wound and twisted themselves into gales, storms and finally hurricanes. For these last twenty-five or so years these storms have been continuously raging out of control.

In my second year at summit, I was ostracized by my fellow students and from society by its leaders as they were convinced that I was mentally ill and as such, a threat to civilization.'

'Civilization? What's that?'

'Concretely and basically put, it has everything to do with the rough or decorative construction, destruction and reconstruction of so many walls of various shapes and sizes everywhere.'

'A great distraction.'

'On numerous occasions I had tried to tell them about the pulsates, although by that time they were becoming fainter

by the day, but they wouldn't listen. Everywhere in my brain intense static, hissing, jolts and radiation. These have totally blocked off and out the pulsates of my womb and early light days. I never had the slightest chance to find out what was their true source or what they might have wanted to unveil to me. I left civilization's walls to nomadise for no mad was I.

The natural storms in this place have helped me to some extent to forget about the artificial ones. Yet, I spend my days and nights lamenting the loss of my braincalm and its beautiful pulsates. I have lost all.

Look around at the others who were, but now are not any more. I've come here to this Valley of the Bleached almost instinctively to join these countless others who have died of brainstorms and grief. Soon it will be my turn.

My short life has been nothing but a great painful mystery when it could have been a great joyous mystery. That's what has made all the difference.'

'What of your beautiful hair river?'

'What hair river? I would scarcely refer to this shoulder length hair as being a river.'

'I can help you feel the pulsates again.
Allow me to enter into your brain.'

It enters.

'My braincalm it's back! They're back! I can feel the beautiful pulsates. They are more pulsative than ever before. How did you do that?'

'The doing can't be explained by speaking in terms of how. You have your braincalm, and so the pulsates pulsate. That's it.'

The pulsates communicate.

'Hello there again? Why did you block us off and out?'

'I didn't. Pressures were forced in on you by well meaning others. Having no choice but to comply with their wishes was my only choice in the womb and early light days. I tried to tell them in my own innocent ways about my braincalm and you but they wouldn't listen.'

'We'll unveil to you now what we originally wanted to unveil to you.'

It follows the pulsates back to their source deep in an alcove of its brain.

'This is the location of power for you. Whatever has this power. It's the same mysterious power of theallthatiswherever. You've lived without ever being aware of its presence, and thus merely have existed as a single lifeform when you could have been countless. To mysteriate into a lifeform is to be yet of theallthatiswherever. The powerisasitis.'

'It's so wonderful ... so, so wonderful ... so, so, so wonderful. I've no words to describe i?t? ... no words to describe t?h?e ... This is really real, isn't it?'

'Yes, it is really real. With your braincalm restored your eyecalm, earcalm, nosealm, tonguealm, and skinalm are all once again in their harmony for the condition of one directly effects the calmness of all.

Our function was to unveil this to you much earlier than now so that you could know what you are of and be accordingly. That's our function in each and every wherever.

But in your case we did not get the chance to do so due to massive inpourings of pressures by those well meaning others. Now that you have regained your calmness you can be your self as It is not there yet it is its self wherever.'

The hair river immediately returns to its alcove within its braincalm.

The two lifeforms joyously float here up, here down, here over, here there, there up, there down, there over, over into and into overthere.

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Harmony Restored* ~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.

Receptive (smiling) A wonderfully encouraging sighting,
Rísteárd! How the world at this time needs such embrace;
needs such embrace to consign itself to grace.

Rísteárd (smiling) It's the autumn night that's in it,
Receptive.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive What's the greatest disruption of beauty,
Rísteárd?

Rísteárd False promises.

Receptive What would be next?

Rísteárd Tongues with strife.

Receptive Would there be anything else?

Rísteárd (smiling) Absorbing extremes.

Receptive Once beauty has been disrupted, is there any
way, Rísteárd to return it to its former self?

Risteárd (smiling) Yes, there are ways, Receptive. Beauty can always and everywhere be fully restored.

Receptive I doubt that very much, Risteárd after some of the recent sub-human things that have taken place on my home island. How can the life of a tortured baby be restored; the lives of two primary school children; the life of a teenage musician; the life of an innocent elderly lady and beyond its shores the life of one of its favourite princesses?

Risteárd Life cannot be restored, Receptive.

Receptive (smiling) Risteárd, Jesus the Christ rose from the dead.

Risteárd Only health can be restored, Receptive.

Receptive Is there no resurrection then Risteárd?

Risteárd (smiling) The beauty of health restored, Receptive.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive Is it possible, Risteárd to live life without ever knowing what it's all about?

Rísteárd (smiling) Rather it seems, Receptive that it's quite possible or even common habit to live a life without ever remembering what life is.

Receptive (smiling) What's life, *Rísteárd*?

Rísteárd (smiling) Life is the delicate shape of a fish in the morning clouds high above. Life is a sound in the universe; a momentary sound.

Receptive (smiling) A sounding of eighty, ninety, a hundred years or even more is a long-time sound, *Rísteárd*.

Rísteárd (smiling) Compare Receptive the life of a summer butterfly with that of the moon beyond, and that of the moon beyond with the life of the galaxies yonder still.

Receptive (smiling) What is it that we should be remembering, *Rísteárd*?

Rísteárd (smiling) Remembering that we are coming from good; living with good and returning to good.

Receptive Is there a difference between knowing and remembering, *Rísteárd*?

Risteárd (smiling) In one's knowing is one remembering, and in one's remembering is one knowing.

What say you, Receptive to a nice cup of tea, freshly baked cake, and blackberry and apple jam?

Receptive (smiling) I would say, yes, *Risteárd*.

My grandmother, God be good to her now used to make the most delicious blackberry and apple jam.

Risteárd (smiling) Then in your tasting of the finest blackberry and apple jam on the isle, Receptive you'll be remembering ...

Receptive (smiling) And in my remembering, *Risteárd* I'll be knowing. Right?

Risteárd (smiling) There you are.

Aoife joined them for the tea. Great conversation took place.

Receptive (smiling) *Risteárd* do we get a second chance in life?

Risteárd It's a very rare grace, Receptive. But it does happen for those whose intentions are of the noblest kind.

Receptive (smiling) What about for a family; a village community; a whole society or even the entire world?

Rísteárd (smiling) With respect ask a family of its intentions, Receptive and they will be given to you. Seek with respect of its intentions and you will find them. Gently with respect knock and its intentions will be open to you.

Receptive How can I place my trust in their answers, *Rísteárd*?

Rísteárd (smiling) If you ask of anything, Receptive with respect it will be given to you.

Receptive Will respect pass away, *Rísteárd*? Rather has respect in the family, communities, society or even in the entire world already passed away?

Rísteárd (smiling) The turf in the fire here, Receptive will pass away but the flame of respect will not pass away.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) This conversation that we've been having here this night *Rísteárd*, has it been really real or really unreal?

Rísteárd (smiling) Interesting question. And I will ask,
Receptive was George Berkeley really real or really unreal?

Receptive (smiling) He was, *Rísteárd* of course really real. He
lived, he worked, he thought, he wrote and in such a fashion
completed his span of life.

Rísteárd (smiling) Then our conversation too was really real.
How about 'his reality ' Receptive?

Receptive Whose reality, *Rísteárd*?

Rísteárd (smiling) George's reality.

Receptive (smiling) Only in perception, *Rísteárd* I imagine.

Rísteárd (smiling) Then you've imagined well, Receptive.
Shall we with such fine insight be calling it a night?

Receptive (smiling) I suppose it's better, *Rísteárd*.
Rest being important too.

Rísteárd (smiling) The nights are many in number, and as
many again in number are the stories needing to be told. If you
are in no particular rush to leave the inn, then you are very
welcome to sit yourself down there again tomorrow night, in
that very same chair, where you may happily listen to whatever

sighting the fire will bring to my eyes. And it would be my anticipation, Receptive that we would be following it with some very fine discourse as we did this night.

Receptive Thank you, Risteárd. It's very good to be here.

Risteárd You're most welcome, Receptive.

You go ahead now to your bed.

Take the candle from the table with you.

I will rake the fire.

Receptive Good night so, Risteárd, and thanks again.

Risteárd Have a sound sleep, Receptive.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Risteárd *Exeunt to go up to Gan Smál cascade in the moonlight with Aoife*

*Having pleasantly undressed each other they are now being veiled
in the moon drenched sheen and ushered effortlessly by it
into the waiting welcoming pool.
And, oh, how good that water feels on the skin;
So good on this night of the Harvest Moon.*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Harmony Restored*

Sunday Eve the 21st September 2002

Annotations:

George Berkeley - George Berkeley (1685-1753) influential Irish philosopher
Gan Smál - from Gaedhilge, 'gan' meaning 'without/no', and 'smál' meaning 'blemish/disgrace': being without blemish; an immaculate place. A name with reference to the cascade and its environs rather than to any event which was said to have taken place at one time in its immediate vicinity.



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 28. *Who said I*

Prologue:

Sun has been above the eastern hills a full two hours already. Rísteárd and Bealtaine are out in the hill country strolling.

They are coming to a large east-facing cornfield that has only very recently been harvested. In the center of the field, Rísteárd is lying down on his back atop a large bail of golden straw while Bealtaine charmed by the different scents has gone off running here and there about the field.

Above is a bright clear blue autumnal sky. A flock of faithful tutelaries enter the scene and are circling about directly above Rísteárd. Sun is playing on the underside of their wings. Of all the birds on the isle, Rísteárd admires the crows by far for they are so wonderfully family orientated.

He has spent a long time here on the bail wondering happily about so many things; wondering about perpetual transformation.

He is now crossing over an ancient stone bridge on his way back down to the inn. Pausing, for he is noticing some unusual clouds quickly forming off to the southeast. They are not rain clouds for so white and light are they.

From high up in the blue behind the clouds there is opening down an avenue of a golden blue hue. Floating in a standing position down along the avenue to the surface of the stream is a young

Chinese woman of great beauty ~~~ along over the surface of the shimmering water floating she is towards Rísteárd.

Rísteárd recognizes her.

Li Ping Yang's dress of finest colours and exquisite quality is in the style of a Tang Dynasty princess. Of sublime natural beauty are her hands and feet. Oh, how wonderful is her smile! She is presenting to Rísteárd a basket of fresh peaches.

In elegant poetic Chinese, Ping Yang is telling him that she has come on behalf of her father, the Immortal Poet Li Tai Bai to present him with a great blessing touching on the landscape of Huang Shan.

Rísteárd whose love of the landscape of Huang Shan is comparable only to that of his love for the landscape of Éire is with tears of joy humbly accepting the blessing.

Using the parapet of the bridge as a writing table, Rísteárd is composing a short poem for her to take with her as a gift to give to her father.

Very much pleased, Ping Yang is smiling and waving to Rísteárd as she returns into the southeastern sky from whence she had come.

Rísteárd carrying the basket of fresh peaches is making his way homewards to the inn with Bealtaine sauntering away along beside him.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Rísteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him is his guest, Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Rísteárd Ah, this pleasing fire, Receptive revives to my eyes the sighting of *Who said I*.

Receptive How does it proceed, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Risteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?
I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Risteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations
iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another
world)

Lostcount is pacing up and down along the bank of a
brook muttering away out loud to himself.

'Who said that I? Who said that I? Who said that I?'

'Chaubran, perhaps we should go down and, say hello to
him.'

'You're always anxious to help, aren't you, Empathy?'

'I've got a good teacher.'

'Pardon the intrusion but we've come to appreciate your painting.'

'Who are you?'

'This is my friend, Chaubran, and I'm Empathy.'

'I've painted nothing as you can see because I've encountered an unbelievable problem.'

'Try us. We've got all the time in the world.'

'About six weeks ago, I came here to do some landscape paintings. Then as I was about to paint, it suddenly hit me that before I begin to paint I should first know who I am, and in that way I would be better able to understand that which I was about to paint.'

I was delighted to have had such a wonderful insight. I dropped my brush and sat just looking at that scene over there and wondering how I would go about getting to know what I am. I began with "I know who I am."

Upon uttering these words, I realized that they were two 'I's in the sentence. The former I was claiming to know the latter I. Then I asked myself if the latter I also knew the former I. I was about to put forward an answer, then I noticed that somebody was speaking about the former and, latter 'I's. In other words, another I had entered into the picture. And yet another I again had appeared who was now talking about the I that was talking about the former and latter 'I's.

Up till now, I have managed to count thirty-three thousand, seven hundred and twenty-eight 'T's, and the end seems to be nowhere in sight.'

'Accept that you are all those 'T's and countless more besides. Paint, and each I will reveal itself to you according to the external reality. Be an I and an I. That's all. Be all of yourself. Let your sacred sanctuary be for you.'

'Maybe I've got multi-personality sickness.'

'Not at all. You're very healthy. We're 'T's without end. Every I is a me that is different from another I which is also a me, and this is a most wonderful thing to be aware of. If you understand this, you will paint every day of your life and never get tired of presenting something new and wonderful to the world. Allow your 'T's the pleasure of being you. The world needs 'you'l's. Learn to move freely with your 'T's.'

He sits down and happily begins to paint magnificent golden blue swirls without using any paints or brushes.

Empathy and Chaubran move away silently.

'That was a beautiful thing you said down there to him, Chaubran.'

'It was you, Empathy who first brought our attention to him and approached him. This too is indeed a great beauty.'

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Who said I ~*
a sighting of the sacred hearth.

Receptive (smiling) How important is etiquette, Risteárd?

Risteárd (smiling) We define ourselves by the etiquette we
are, Receptive.

Receptive In today's world, Risteárd there is hardly any
emphasis being placed on etiquette.

Risteárd (smiling) Etiquette is an evergreen; the bluegreen of
the sea and sky.

Etiquette is a phoneme; the sound of the wind and the
voice of a child.

Etiquette is a fragrance; the fragrance of oates barley
and wheat.

Etiquette is a flavour; the flavour of snowflakes
and icicles.

Etiquette is a feel; the feel of the earth to your palm.

Etiquette is a thought; the thought that is always of
etiquette.

Receptive (smiling) Truly beautiful are your words, Risteárd.

Risteárd (smiling) Etiquette delights in giving such a refined
reply as you have given, Receptive.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, Rísteárd.

Moments of enjoying gazing into the softly glowing fire.

Receptive (smiling) How many levels of meaning are there, Rísteárd in the phrase "... you will paint every day of your life and never get tired of presenting something new and wonderful to the world "...?

Rísteárd (smiling) What a fine question this is, Receptive. Are you the only one who has not noticed how the mountains and valleys colour themselves according to the movement of the seasons; how the rivers and sea do; the forest and fields; the birds of the air, and the fishes of the waters; the deer of the groves, and the ants of the grasses; the pure mud of the lakeshores, and the human of the womb?

Receptive I hadn't thought about these in such a fashion, Rísteárd.

Rísteárd (smiling) All of these, Receptive are painting every moment of their life. Consider for a while that the great wind is a colour of many colours from which the myriad transformations receive from it their many colourings.

Receptive What if the wind is strong, Rísteárd will not the colours also be strong?

Rísteárd When the wind is strong so too are the colours, Receptive strong. When the wind is like unto a breeze so too are the colours soft and gentle. Have you not seen the orb's season in high summer, in deep winter, in emerging spring and in resting autumn?

Receptive (smiling) I've only seen regions where it has been experiencing one of these four seasons at a time. How is it possible, Rísteárd for the orb which we call 'Earth' to be experiencing a high summer, a deep winter and an emerging spring, and a resting autumn all at the same time?

Rísteárd (smiling) There are the seasons of the regions, Receptive and the region of the seasons.

Receptive I don't fully understand, Rísteárd.

Rísteárd In the regions of which you spoke, Receptive seasons are experienced as distinct and particular. Winter is winter, summer summer, autumn autumn and spring spring. When we come however to the orb, we are speaking of one region with four seasonal attributes. The season of the orb may well be called the 'fifth season' for it is the only season that simultaneously has all the other seasons in its one breath.

When this breath blows strongly or gently the myriad lifeforms on the orb all have life in abundance; all have colour in abundance.

Its sky colours itself to the condition of soft sky hues.

Its sea to the condition of blue greenness.

Its hills colour themselves to the condition of firmness.

Its valleys and fields to the condition of ripeness.

Its lifeforms, including the human to the condition of faithfulness.

Receptive How can its sky, Risteárd be said to colour itself by itself to the condition of soft sky hues? In the same breath how can the hills colour themselves by themselves to the condition of firmness; the sea to blue greenness; the valleys and fields to ripeness, and the lifeforms including ourselves to faithfulness?

Risteárd (smiling) Everything Receptive is naturally integrated, and always has been in that the galaxy alone would not have been able to give sky soft hues had not sky first given these itself to itself.

Sky alone would not have been able to give sun brightness and warmth had not sun first given it itself to itself.

Sun alone would not have been able to give blue greenness to the sea had not sea first given it itself to itself.

Land alone would not have been able to give firmness to the hills had not they first given it themselves to themselves.

Moisture and sunshine alone would not have been able to give ripeness to the valleys and fields had not they first given it themselves to themselves.

The myriad lifeforms would not have been able to give faithfulness to each other had not each and everyone one of them first given it themselves to themselves.

Receptive (smiling) But from where does soft hues, brightness, warmth, blue greenness, firmness, ripeness and faithfulness come from, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) Galaxy is of soft hues we can say; sky of brightness, sun of warmth, sea of blue greenness, hills of firmness, valleys and fields of ripeness, and lifeforms of faithfulness.

Galaxy paints every day of its life and never gets tired of presenting something new and wonderful to the world. Sky, Sun, Sea, Hills, Valleys and Fields do likewise. How much more then in keeping harmony with all things, Receptive must

we too be in painting our every day with faithfulness, ripeness, firmness, blue greenness, warmth, brightness, and soft hues.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) Shall we Receptive enjoy the integration of a cup of tea and some freshly baked cake and blackberry and apple jam?

Receptive (smiling) Already *Risteárd* I have given myself over to enjoying them.

They are enjoying the tea and cake with Aoife's marvellous company.

Receptive Earlier *Risteárd* we spoke of faithfulness. In these ethically challenging times in which we live is there any paradigm for faithfulness to be found?

Risteárd There are two paradigms, Receptive. The first is the family of one and the other is the family of many.

Each human lifeform is a child born of parents. Each human lifeform within is a family unto itself consisting of a sacred sanctuary, six senses, and myriads of undetermined lifeforms. This is the family of one.

Some human lifeforms will marry and start families of their own. This is the family of many, where there are parents and a child or a number of children.

Receptive Often nowadays, necessity Risteárd has made it so that there is only a single parent to take care of a child or take care of a number of children.

Risteárd (smiling) This is the family of one with a child or a number of children, thus Receptive making it a family of many.

Receptive But being without a spouse, yet with a child or a number of children to take care of how does this constitute a family of many, Risteárd? Is it not something else?

Risteárd (smiling very happily) When one loves one's own child as one faithfully loves oneself, Receptive, and loves a child who isn't one's own as faithfully as one loves one's own child then there is an admirable paradigm of faithfulness in that family of many.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) What is the source of your own faithfulness, Risteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) My parents, grandparents, great-grandparents; my parents ad infinitum.

Receptive Is there no original source to be found for your faithfulness, *Rísteárd*?

Rísteárd (smiling) Of course there is, *Receptive*. It's there within the soft flames.

Receptive Pardon me, *Rísteárd* for I cannot see anything save the lovely soft flames.

Rísteárd The origin is forever and wherever with us, *Receptive*. If the flames of the hearth were having a similar conversation to what we are having now they would probably be saying,

"The origin is there within those two human lifeforms."

For them we would be the soft flames; we would be the eternal vessels of origin as they are now for us.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive How is the family of one or the family of many, Rísteárd obligated to the other families about them in the community, and also in the greater social context?

Rísteárd (smiling) Faithfulness is not an obligation, Receptive. It is a cloud floating in the blue expanse from whence a fruitful shower the thirsty soil bedew.

Receptive (smiling) Poetic Rísteárd.

Rísteárd (smiling) Rather the blue expanse is, Receptive.

Receptive (smiling) It may well be, but it has Rísteárd as its voice for the human ear.

Rísteárd (heartily laughing with tears dancing in his bright clear eyes)

Even the soft flames there, Receptive will find these the funniest of all words spoken here this night.

Receptive I've studied well the Confucian way, and also the Muslim way with regard to the special emphasis they place on the family, Rísteárd. Often, I have been struck by how remarkably similar their conclusions are concerning the family and its obligation to society.

But I must say in all honesty, Rísteárd that albeit I am a family of many myself, I would have great difficulty making

their ways the way for my spouse and I and our children. What is it about their ways that is causing me to react in such a fashion, Risteárd or what is it about me that I can't identify with their vision concerning the family?

Risteárd (smiling) What is most admirable about their ways, Receptive is that their hearts are in the right place; their focus is on the family.

Receptive (smiling) But why then can't I accept their ways, Risteárd?

Risteárd (smiling) Faithfulness is not an obligation, Receptive. It is a cloud floating in the blue expanse from whence a fruitful shower the thirsty soil bedew.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) Shall we be faithful to the given night for our rest, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) Yes, let's be faithful to the given night, Risteárd for our rest is surely important too.

Rísteárd (smiling) The nights are many in number, and as many again in number are the stories needing to be told. If you are in no particular rush to leave the inn, then you are very welcome to sit yourself down there again tomorrow night, in that very same chair, where you may happily listen to whatever sighting the fire will bring to my eyes. And it would be my anticipation, Receptive that we would be following it with some very fine discourse as we did this night.

Receptive Thank you, *Rísteárd*. It's very good to be here.

Rísteárd You're most welcome, Receptive.
You go ahead now to your bed.
Take the candle from the table with you.
I will rake the fire.

Receptive Good night so, *Rísteárd*, and thanks again.

Rísteárd Have a sound sleep, Receptive.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Rísteárd *Exeunt*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Who said I*
Sunday Eve the 5th October 2002

Annotations:

Li Tai Bai - Li Tai Bai (701-762 AD) the Immortal Poet, living during the peak of the Tang period, wrote as many as nine hundred poems. Qing Lian Ju Shi, meaning 'Blue Lotus Recluse' was his poetic name.

He was probably the greatest of the ancient Chinese poets. It is generally agreed that between them, Li Bai and Du Fu elevated the poetic form to a level of power and expression that remains unsurpassed by poets of subsequent generations.

His work is characterized by its imaginative and unrestrained expression of feeling. Rated as a romantic poet, his writings are endowed with a deep appreciation of people and their lives. The magnificent scenery he saw and enjoyed as well as the profound expression of his own desires and sorrows are subjects of his work.

Du Fu (712-770 AD), the Sage of Poets, lived in a period of change when the prosperity of the Tang began to decline. Having suffered obstacles in his official career, he began to travel around the country and to write poetry. Living as a refugee during the Rebellion of An and Shi gave him a personal empathy with the sufferings of the poor.

His work shows a great depth of feeling for the plight of the common people. In 759, Du Fu went to live in Chengdu and it is here that his former residence the Thatched Cottage is open for viewing by visitors.

Recording as they do both the military and political situations pertaining at this time, Du Fu's poems are referred to as "the mirror of his time". He is regarded as providing a typical representation of realism in poetry.

The Tang Dynasty was the golden age of Chinese poetry. In the number of poems and variety of poetic forms, the beauty of imagery and broadness of themes, Tang poetry surpassed all that had preceded it.

The Complete Anthology of Tang Poetry, edited during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911 AD), contains over 50,000 poems written by some two thousand poets. The collection provides a magnificent insight into all aspects of the social life of the period.

Huang Shan - from Chinese, meaning 'Yellow Mountain(s)' ... presented here as a beautiful synonym for the landscape of China as Li Tai Bai had experienced it and expressed it in his poetry.

Located in the southern part of Anhui Province, the Yellow Mountains extend across four counties - Shexian, Yixian, Taiping, and Xining.

The Yellow Mountains, also known as Yi Shan during the Qin Dynasty (211-207 B.C.), got its present name in 747 A.D. when Li Tai Bai wrote about them in *Seeing off Hermit Wen Back to Former Residence White Goose Peak in the*

Yellow Mountains

Thousands of feet high towers the Yellow Mountains
With its thirty-two magnificent peaks,
Blooming like golden lotus flowers
Amidst red crags and rock columns.
Once I was on its lofty summit,
Admiring Tianmu Pine below.
The place is still traceable where the immortal
Before ascending to heaven made elixir out of jade.
Now you embark on your journey there alone
Another Wen Boxue I happened to meet
Who've been to Five Mountains for beauty of nature,
Leaving behind countless ranges of hills.
Homeward you go back to White Goose Ridge,
Back to drink from your Elixir Well.
If by chance I pay you a visit,
I expect to be met by your light carriage.
Eastwards from Lingyang you bend your steps,
And pick your way through fragrant bushes,
Many a stream and many a ford,
Peaks upon peaks shutting out the sky
That's where I'll call on you some other day
Across a bridge that spans cliffs like a rainbow.



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 29. *Sounds & Scents*

Prologue:

Perhaps the most life-wearied man of all the many life-wearied visitors both male and female who have been guided to the inn, and whose health had been fully restored, returned there during the week with his family for they too had been wanting to thank Risteárd in person for restoring him to good health.

As usual, Risteárd, however would take little or no credit for the restoration of the man's health. On the said morning, he had been merely attending flowers, he told them. And without feeling the need to be saying any more about it, he did with gratitude and joyfulness of heart invite them to be staying at the inn for a few days.

And the happy family did stay for three days at the inn; enjoying the company of Aoife, Risteárd and their children before setting out contentedly for their own home yesterday.

Risteárd rose very early this morning to be on Cnoc an Sean-Scribhinn when Gealach would be setting and Grian Fhómhar would be rising.

The view is quite spectacular as Gealach is being veiled in the comfort west, and Féileacán and Coileán Uasal are becoming more distinct high in the plenteous south. Risteárd appears to be beyond the horizon in the mystic north. And the first orange glows of Grian Fhómhar are now appearing in the glorious east; fog is all along the banks of the Glandhuan.

Mysteriously beautiful is this heavenly scene; yes, from the heavens mysteriously beautiful must the isle of Éire seem. Yes, from the heavens mysteriously beautiful must the neighbouring isles seem, and the lands all beyond to the east, west, south, and north.

Rísteárd is richly going to spend this wonderfully crisp, fresh, clear autumnal day in remembering the summer with the floating down adown leaves, and with the standing firm trees to the winter and spring in looking forward.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Rísteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him is his guest, Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Rísteárd Ah, this pleasing fire, Receptive revives to my eyes the sighting of *Sounds & Scents*.

Receptive How does it proceed, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,

Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Rísteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?
I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Rísteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations
iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another
world)

Golden sunbeams sprightly dancing along the valley floor. Gentle puffs of white smoke tremblingly wafting their way slowly up through the trees. Sounds and scents of early morning. Chaubran comes to a clearing and there he finds an old man with long white hair pensively placing some sticks over a fire.

'Good morning? I noticed the smoke as I was walking along those hills.'

'Pace is with you. Please, come share in our breakfast.'

'Thank you. I have some fruit here you might like.'

'They're beautiful windows.

Roots playing in rich soil

Tree grows and spreads itself into the blue sky

Rains wash snow clothes and sun decorates

Grass beneath feet and golden fruit against the blue sky

Blue sky on back and golden fruit against the green grass

Appreciating hand reaches and it willing gives.

Trees and I are of a kind.'

'Forgive my impoliteness. I'm Chaubran de Malampeh.'

'I'm Broodahead de Ismornevening. And over there plucking some petals is Alwaysajoy de Ismornevening.

Every morning she likes to bring and spread new petals lightly into a bowl filled with fresh sparkling clear water. We

like looking at them as we have breakfast. Alwaysajoy says a new day is an opportunity to fill our sacred sanctuaries with new ideas. Yes, new ideas, but alas ...'

Anxiety begins to surface slowly on the old man's face.

'Have you ever thought, Chaubran about what's inside the outside of things?'

'I try to, but it's hard to get to the insides if the outsides are very thick.'

'Were we not born from an insight? I mean inside?'

'Indeed we were.'

'Yet, it's strange, isn't it that we have so little understanding of insides?'

'Perhaps we've been too captivated by the charm of externals. On the other hand, sometimes when I look at the day sky for a long time I can't decide whether it's really concave or really convex. Mesmerizing.'

'Perhaps it's neither or maybe even a combination of both depending upon what we have been looking at before we looked up at the sky.'

'When we were in the womb was not its wall like unto a sky to us?'

'I guess you could say that.'

'Well, then is it really correct for us to say we were on the inside or we were on the outside?'

'If we were not on an inside then where were we?'

'That's the problem. Look at the sky for a while and you'll see what I mean. In one sense we can say that we are here on the inside, yet in another sense we could also claim to be very much on the outside. Do you think it makes a great difference, Chaubran?'

'To a bird, being on the outside of a cage is very different from being on the inside.'

'What if that cage was so big that the bird could never be able to reach the bars even if it were to fly for all its life in one direction?

'When one views Reality in terms of bars one does not have to see or touch bars in order to confirm that one is confined within something.

Would it not be a better idea to give up viewing the sky as being some sort of dividing line, and by doing so immediately eliminate the problem of confinement altogether? In truth, I've found no reason so far why I should view the sky as being some sort of boundary.

Take it at night. Where can one begin to even speak of boundaries? The day sky for want of something better to do while waiting around for broad deep night sky to appear, likes to be a playful hallucinator. It once made us believe that the galaxies were in fact really pools of some sort of white mysterious gas oozing into this Universe from another Universe.

Often times has not our one and only moon been presented to us as an alluring white tunnel in the great darkness offering us a way of escape?

Such, in kind, are the ways of their playfulness.'

'Ah, I'm a broken man, Chaubran. Somehow lately, I've been making philosophical cul-de-sacs for myself on a grand scale, and then boldly walking down them.

I once taught at a very prestigious university a subject called: Linguistic Mathematics which I defined as *the scientific study of mathematical language*.

It was I myself who created this unique subject. Among my students it was very popular primarily because it contained so many new and imaginative ideas.

Then one clear afternoon in a spring, a very curious thing happened to me as I was walking across the lawn from my office at the university. I literally became a tree. I could feel my roots in the ground like one feels one's toes inside one's slippers. When I looked down I could see bark and branches on which buds were beginning to appear. I thought unto myself, barkbranchesbuds. I was a tree in every sense.

Then I saw very clearly Wind coming towards me and going right by me in a jollyful vangoghian manner.

I had at first a vague memory of being a professor, but the memory faded away very quickly.

I stood there in that spot as a tree for several springs. Then again one afternoon in a spring, I suddenly found myself walking across the lawn only to discover that I had become a very old man.

I returned to the building that hemmed in my office. And with opening my door I saw that there was an old man sitting at a desk. It was me! I opened my mouth to speak but no words came forth at that moment. There I stood and watched as he rose to get a book from another desk. It was then he noticed me.

'Where did you go that afternoon in a spring so many years ago as we were walking across the lawn? Since you left, I've not been able to think up one original creative thought of my own to share with my students. I had as such to discontinue my lectures on the very popular subject of Linguistic Mathematics and instead have had to make do with just piking to them the mouldic thoughts of people long fossilized.

I've never had a happy day since you left. Only fading memories have kept me going.'

I've always loved wandering in the fields and valleys. So many were the times I tried to get you to listen. I guess I could

no longer stay cooped up in these concrete dens.

Unconsciously, I must have stepped away from the body as our body was walking across the lawn.

A case of place-synchronization transfer.'

'I'm sorry, I didn't realize you'd longed so much for the woods and the fields. I guess I was too busy trying to be the best of the best to notice or take any heed.'

'Come, let us go to the valleys to dance with the morning sun, and play joyfully with the moon and the stars for there is nothing here in these concrete plastered cages for us anymore. Concrete has been keeping you from being conscious that you have been and are in fact living in a cage. Come, all will welcome us!'

'You're right. If only I had listened to you earlier?'

'Come. Say no more.'

Here in these beautiful valleys I have been living happily for how long now I do not know, and anyway to know is not so important. What's really important is that I had the courage to be my full self in a new way and so I'm here. I guess lifeforms were never meant for confinement of any sort.'

'But how come your face is so very full of worry?'

'Lately, I've been having awful nightmares in which I see thousands of tons of what appears to be concrete rolling across lush green fields and woods like a great flow of gray lava. Then

almost immediately in the wake of its flow, huge gray multi-angular buildings appear which reach way up into the clouds. I hear a voice telling me to get to higher ground for a Great Flood is going to cover under the whole world. I try desperately to climb to higher ground, but my feet seem to weigh a ton. I can't even get myself to move one step. And as the flow of lava concrete is about to cover over this valley, I wake up in a cold sweat.'

'At the mouth of the Neosewage River there once stood the mighty city of concrete and iron called New Solid.'

'Once? I visited New Solid in my junior year at university. That was a long long time ago now, of course.'

'Now in that same place there is no longer any concrete or iron cages for any and all lifeforms to be seen, only beautiful fieldwoodbrook dwellings. It has a new name, that of Supple on Handsome. The Handsome River.'

'Supple on Handsome? Soft and beautiful.
A lovely name.'

'About thirty some years ago the citizens of New Solid had no choice but to do something with their city before it was too late.'

'I haven't read any papers in ages.'

'There were many meetings and many suggestions were put forward by people from all walks of life. Then one wonderful day, a young girl came up with a brilliant idea.'

'Out of the mouths of children often comes forth great insights.'

'She proposed that they speed up the natural process by which concrete and iron over many years eventually returns to soil. In time a way of doing this was worked out. It was very simple, just a matter of introducing some soilers to the buildings. A building of a hundred floors could be reduced to a large mound of soil in hours. Within one year all buildings had been returned to soil.

The people happily turned to living in very comfortable fieldwoodbrook dwellings. They have never been in want as the land has provided generously for all their needs. Each year, they have been able to give without any strings attached to the needy in other parts of the world.

They look forward to doing all things as they have allowed themselves the privilege of always having plenty to do, be they young or old, and all without damaging the dwellings of the numerous other lifeforms with which they cohabit the whole area.

They have an interesting sign leading out of the dwellings, which reads:

IF YOU TRUST ONLY PEOPLE HOW CAN YOU CALL
YOURSELF A PERSON?

Other cities in that country are now following their lead.

It will only be a matter of spreading the news far and wide to other regions before whole countries will be doing like wisdom.

Sounds very much like a dream doesn't it? But it's all real, and taking place at this very moment.

I've seen the photographs of New Solid in the library at Supple on Handsome, and there is no comparison between the two.

Soft and beautiful are the dwellings of Supple on Handsome.'

'Chaubran my heart leaps for joy upon hearing your words. Yet, it's beyond me as to know why I've been having those nightmares in the first place, even though I live in this beautiful valley.'

'Do you still dance with the morning sun and play with the moon and stars?'

'Well, actually, I stopped a few months ago because I wanted to spend more time reading up on modern theoretical astrophysics.'

'Another face of the relentless urge of man to incase in concrete all cobwebs one thread at a time until the children of Theorophysica are forced to produce invisible cages, namely, Black Holes. The ultimate in cages. No bars. And who are these state-of-the-art cages ultimately for?'

'Of course! That's it! It has to be the reason. I allowed myself to be blindly enchanted by this urge.'

'Reads merely channel the wind so that music may be shaped for the dancer to dance. They're neither the music nor the dance.'

'Gloria! Gloria! Gloria!

I'm dancing! I'm dancing! I'm dancing!

Something very wonderful is happening. And the Great Flood is subsiding.

Gloria, this is Chaubran de Malampeh, the bringer of good news.'

'Thank you, Chaubran. My companion in truth
Friedrich need not have anymore nightmares.'

'I'm refreshed by being here in this place with you both.'

'Let's have some food now for our bodies. You must be hungry, Chaubran? Friedrich loves being a good host of fine conversation, but he forgets that people have stomachs too.'

'Chaubran thank you. Thank you so much for everything. From this morning forth we will with joy in our hearts tell to others as they travel this way of the wonderful awareness which is now taking place in the human world.'

'It was the way the smoke was wafting from your fire, Friedrich. Your own pace is with you both. Stay well. I will look through the many windows, and daily pluck petals with joy and thankfulness of heart for the beauty of being aware of beauty.'

'The Great Pace will in all places be with you Chaubran de Malampeh.'

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Sounds & Scents* ~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.

Receptive This sighting is wonderful, Risteárd but my heart is so heavy that I can't hardly bring myself to talk.

Risteárd (smiling) What is it Receptive which weights you down so?

Receptive Seven months ago, Risteárd I was overjoyed when you and Aoife sent me an invitation to come here to the inn. Throughout the summer I was looking forward to coming with every sunrise. The early days of autumn filled me with even greater happiness.

Then, this morning on my way from my home to the inn, I stopped in the village of Seodachán to buy a newspaper. I bought the *Irish Times*. There was in it Risteárd an article that really upset me.

Risteárd (smiling) Aoife & I are very happy that you should come to visit us, Receptive. You are the first Special Guest to come to us from the island itself. All of our other Special Guests of late have come to us from beyond its shores. Many were invited, Receptive from all over the island, but only you have accepted the invitation by coming to visit us.

We're very happy indeed, and most thankful to you Receptive and to Máire your lovely bride for letting you spend some time here with us. It's not easy for newlyweds so deeply in love as ye are, and with yere first baby on the way to let each other be out of loving sight for more than a few hours.

Of what did the article make mention, Receptive?

Receptive I have it here, Rísteárd, but please, please you don't have to read it for it's quite deplorable; quite deplorable and disgraceful it is, so it is.

An image of a child cries out for justice

by Kathryn Holmquist

The Irish Times: Weekend Review

19th October 2002

Perhaps it is a far better thing we do Rísteárd, if we toss it right now there into the fire.

Rísteárd The fire has great patience, Receptive and will accept it when we are ready to submit. But first I must know your pain.

Rísteárd begins to silently read the article to himself while Receptive is pensively gazing into the fire.

Having read it entirely Rísteárd is submitting it to the fire.

He is couching his face in his hands having his elbows pegged into his lap. Tears are beginning to cascade out between his fingers with no stopping in them. Receptive has quickly gone to tell Aoife.

Having swiftly come, she is sitting beside her Risteárd and is with gently running the fingers of her left hand through his hair, and soothing the backs of his wet hands with her right.

Humming softly and slightly swaying she remains so for three hours with this tried and true approach until her Risteárd's tears did reach their own adjournment.

Risteárd Receptive that which has been let loose in the world cannot be overpowered even with the combined efforts of all the religions of the world, with that of all the philosophies and sciences, and with that of technological development and financial wealth.

Receptive (worryingly) Then what is the world to do, Risteárd? What of our yet unborn child?

Risteárd (smiling) Draw closer, Receptive and we will whisper it to you less our words should be overheard.

Receptive (extolling) Oh, Aoife! Oh, Risteárd! Full of Grace! Blessed is the fruit of yere words! Be it done unto Máire and I and unto our children as unto ye and yere children; unto the peoples of these isles and unto the peoples of the whole world. Blessed be the family!

Risteárd (smiling) Shall we grace the night with our rest,
Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) I suppose it's better, *Risteárd*.
Rest being important too.

Risteárd (smiling) The nights are many in number, and as
many again in number are the stories needing to be told. If you
are in no particular rush to leave the inn, then you are very
welcome to sit yourself down there again tomorrow night, in
that very same chair, where you may happily listen to whatever
sighting the fire will bring to my eyes. And it would be my
anticipation, *Receptive* that we would be following it with some
very fine discourse as we did this night.

Receptive Thank you, *Risteárd*. It's very good to be here.

Risteárd You're most welcome, *Receptive*.

You go ahead now to your bed.

Take the candle from the table with you.

I will rake the fire.

Receptive Good night to you both, and thanks again.

Aoife & Risteárd Have a sound sleep, *Receptive*.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Sounds & Scents*

Sunday Eve the 19th October 2002

Annotations:

Cnoc an Sean-Scribhinn - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'hill', 'the', and 'old manuscript'

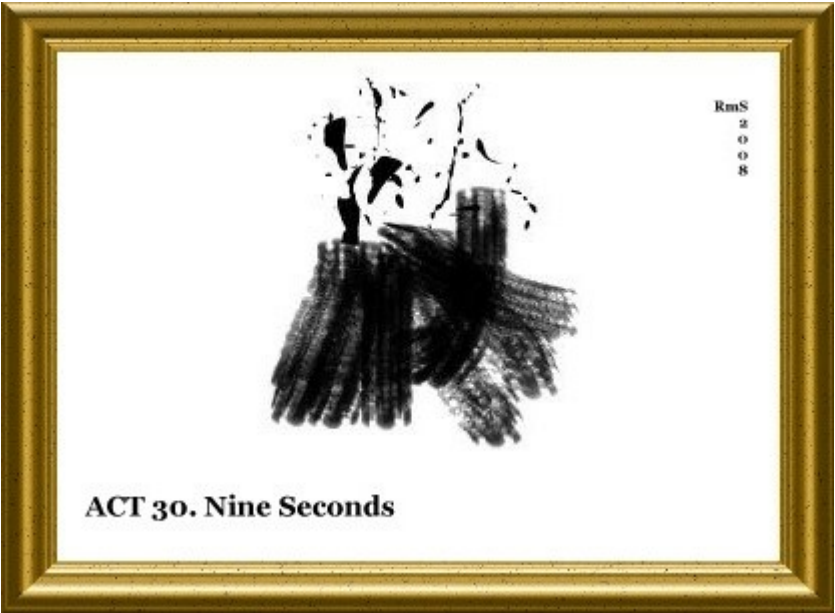
Gealach - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'brightness': the Moon

Grian Fhómhar - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'Sun of autumn'

Féileacán - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'butterfly': the Orion constellation

Coileán Uasal - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'puppy' and 'enchanted': the star Sirius; the brightest star in the heavens, positioned 'near' Orion

Glandhuan - from Gaedhilge, 'glan' meaning 'clean/clear/pure' and 'dhuan' meaning 'song/canticle'



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 30. *Nine Seconds*

Prologue:

Nine nights of discord with eight days of concord did Risteárd spend in deep meditation whilst fasting in a solitary cave some twelve kilometers to the west of the inn.

Returned he from there full of joyful accord by way of the amber golden elms and beeches, and along along by the crimson hawthorns to the Scots Pines of sapphire green before the inn, where he paused awhile beneath their noble branches, to take in the translating views of the intensity and simplicity of style presenting itself so effortlessly there in the cyclorama. And he was aware of himself translating with the scene and in the scene; his sacred sanctuary brimming over with appreciation.

Now this was the forenoon of Thursday, and delighted delighted was he to be back in good time to celebrate later in the day Samhan Eve with Aoife and the children, and the guests.

On these first three days of Samhan, it is customary for Aoife, Risteárd and the children to visit their nearest neighbours here in the hill country, and to wish them blessings of good health and joy for the long nights and short days of these six months of Samhan. Those neighbours who live a little further away are visited in the coming weeks. Today having been only the second day of Samhan.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Risteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him is his guest, Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Risteárd Ah, this pleasing fire, Receptive revives to my eyes the sighting of *Nine Seconds*.

Receptive How does it proceed, Risteárd?

Risteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Risteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?
I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Risteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations
iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another
world)

Eleven four in the forenoon. Slump the Sad, wearing
an oxygen mask, happens to come upon Smear the Slush, who
wears no mask and is sitting on a trashcan overlooking the
wide river. Brushes litter the ground. He is painting a scene.

'Hello? What are you painting?'

'One frame of this beautiful paradise.'

'Paradise? You must be joking?'

'I've never seen such a perfect blend of beauty so early
in the forenoon. Look at the heavenly way that huge volume of

thick black velvet smoke rises so stately from the nine factory chimneys. Mushroomantic.

Look how the ashen sun dances so so prettily on the sewage as it poursnpoursnspreadsnspreads itself out over the sulphurous river. Psychodelical.

Look at the way the metalliferous mud has been given form and depth by the rolling rippling charm of the public trash mountain as it makes its way ever so slowly and gracefully towards the water's edge. Dienamistical.

Torn blacykellogwray plastic bags stuck in the bare trees transport me to another world. Such beauty all around me brings tears to my eyes. The thundering roar of cars and trucks. Ah ah, crashscendo! Such such such such beauty takes my breath away. Paradisical. Simply paradizzsical!

'If this be paradise, then what must paraparadise be like?'

'Paraparadisical, of course. A greater profusion of what lies here before us.'

'What will you do with this paradisical painting after you've finished it?'

'I will add it to my collection. This is the final painting in a series which I plan to display in my art gallery on the last day of the year. Here's my card. I'll also be auctioning off my

paintings immediately following the exhibition. Please come if you have time. You may find something interesting.'

'Thank you. Bye.'

'Bye. Enjoy strolling in paradise.'

Sluggishly, Slump the Sad, a victim, drags himself along the path by the river with soliloquizing away to himself.

~^~
~^~P~^~
~^~^~Para~^~^~
~^~Para ~^~ paradise~^~!
~^~^~Para ~^~ paradisaical~^~^~!
~^~^~^~Para ~^~ paraparadisaical~^~^~^~!
~^~^~^~^~Para ~^~ paradoxical~^~^~^~^~!

Is there no PARAKLETOS?

In the art gallery. Forenoon. Last day of the year.

'Hello? Nice to see you again. I'm sorry, but I didn't catch your name the other morning.'

'Slump the Sad.'

'Welcome, Mr the Sad. I hope you find something that's to your taste.'

'Thank you. I'll shuffle around on my own. You've many to meet.'

There are ninety-one paintings on display. All have been painted by the world acclaimed artist Smear the Slush.

Children Playing on Trash Mountain

Tender Smog Resting in a Park Restaurant

Black Tailed Silver Birds Skimming over Roof Tops

Charred Forest of Ecstasy

Spattered Moon

Seagulls Nesting in a Soft Black Bed

Nine Chimneys of Paradise

...

Afternoon. And an auctioneer has taken to the podium.

'Ladies and gentlemen. Good afternoon? Please give a big hand for Artist and poet par excellence, Smear the Slush. Artist the Slush has been delighting the world for over thirty years with his work, and we hope you will continue to do so for many many more years.

I would ask you to raise your glasses, ladies and gentlemen. A toast to you, Artist the Slush! May you have the best of health and happiness now and forever.

On that inspiring note, let the auction begin in earnest.

Now, who will begin the bidding for this absolutely exquisite work of art entitled,

Mutant in Toxiopia

Who will give thirty million? Yes? Thirty, thirty, thirty-one, yes? Thirty-five, yes? Yes? Thirty-seven. Do I see forty? Yes? Forty, yes? Forty-two, forty-three. Do I see forty-five? No, forty-three, forty-three, forty-three million, ladies and gentlemen. Forty-three going once. Going ... Yes? Forty-four. Forty-four. Forty-four. Do I see forty-five? No? No? Okay. Forty-four goooing once. Goooooing twice. Sold! To Mrs Shady White for forty-four million, ladies and gentlemen.'

Ninety paintings having been sold.

'Okay, ladies and gentlemen we are now down to our last painting. The time is ten to midnight. The New Year is waiting to greet us. Our last painting as you can see is breathtakingly stunning. It's entitled,

Nine Chimneys of Paradise

Let me begin the bidding at eighty million. Yes? Eighty-five, ninety, ninety, ninety-five, yes? Yes? One hundred million, one hundred and ten, yes? One hundred and twenty, yes? Yes? One hundred and fifty, one hundred and fifty, yes?

Yes? One hundred and eighty, two hundred, two hundred million, ladies and gentlemen. Two hundred, yes? Yes? Three hundred, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, nine hundred million, ladies and gentlemen. Do I see one thousand million? Yes? Yes? One thousand, one hundred, two hundred, three hundred, four hundred, five hundred, six hundred, seven hundred, eight hundred, nine hundred. One thousand, nine hundred million, ladies and gentlemen. Yes? One thousand, nine hundred and fourteen, forty-five, fifty, sixty-eight, seventy-six, seventy-nine, eighty, eighty-four, eighty-nine, ninety. One thousand, nine hundred and ninety million. Do I see ninety-one? Ninety-one? One thousand, nine hundred and ninety-one million, ladies and gentlemen. Gooing once. Gooooooooing twice. Sold! To Mr Anonymous in the archway for the record price of one thousand, nine hundred and ninety-one million. And also ladies and gentlemen, in a record time, I must add.'

Tremendous round of applause with a standing ovation.

'Thank you ladies and gentlemen for a most entertaining evening. Our special thanks of course goes to Artist Smear the Slush. And, you yourselves have to be thanked for being such deadicated patrons. Without your powerful encouragement and support none of this would be possible. We applaud you with pride.

The proceeds as you already know will be channeled into the Defoliant Project. There are still large areas of the planet which have trees of various types with lush green leaves still left on them. Chemicals and equipment are very expensive these days.'

'Excuse me, Mr Auctioneer! My name is Slump the Sad. I was present when Mr the Slush was putting the final touches to # *Nine Chimneys of Paradise* # I wonder if I could share my feelings with this gathering for a moment?'

'Certainly, Sir. None of us can praise Artist the Slush's marvellous work enough. Please come up to the podium.'

'I've just one thing to say. Mr the Slush, Mr Auctioneer, Mrs Shady White, Mr. Anonymous, ladies and gentlemen, your heads are full of it. Flush it before it flushes you. I beg you.'

'On behalf of us all, thank you very very much for your very very impressive words Mr the Sad. Yes, you hit the nail on the headstone. We are indeed deeply committed to the degreening of the planet as quickly as possible before it greens us over. What of beauty for our future budding artists if such a tragedy should ever occur?

Yes, let's flush away the greenness. A fine choice of word indeed, Mr the Sad. Truly dienamical.

Flushit, ladies and gentlemen! Let's flushit for all future generations!

Oh, Look; oh, look ladies and gentlemen!
Only nine seconds remaining.'

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Nine Seconds*
~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive Nine seconds may well be remaining, Risteárd but
the new era based on deriving energy from atomic fission and
all which that entails is well and truly on its way.

Risteárd There is nothing well or nothing truthful about it,
Receptive. Keep careful watch and check on those whose
loftiest ambition it is to control and profit on an imperial scale
from the new atomic fission world.

Receptive Who are they, Risteárd that have such an
ambition?

Risteárd Those, Receptive who have been attempting to sit
in the sacred chair, in the sacred field by the sacred sea
between the sacred isles.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive What Risteárd of the problem of radioactive sewage?

Risteárd This is a crucial problem no doubt, Receptive but by far the greater problem is that of cultural sewage. Without cultural sewage, how could radioactive sewage exist?

Receptive What is cultural sewage?

Risteárd Serving conflict ethics. Cultural sewage contaminates every living symbol, sign and virtue of what a people has been holding sacred and precious to them down through the ages.

Receptive Do you speak of a particular people, Risteárd?

Risteárd I speak Receptive of my own people; the people of this beautiful island, and the peoples who have come and become one with us down through the ages in their respect for human dignity; their appreciation of language, literature, art, music and humour, and above all in their faithful love of the natural environment about them be they of Scandinavian, Norman or Saxon origin or of the thousand peoples of the planet.

It is purely relative, Receptive whether one has been living on this isle for scores of years or for hundreds or even for

thousand of years or even for a few hours for 'welcome home' is the perpetual nature of the isle.

We're all here, Receptive welcomed as Éireannchaibh; that is as guests of the Inn of Éire we are all welcomed. And even when one departs from these shores save for a few hours or a few days, weeks, months, years or even what appears to be for a whole lifetime, one is always remembered and considered in the sacred sanctuary of the isle to be one of the Inn of Éire. Such is the length, the breadth, the height, and the depth of the welcome, Receptive.

Receptive I've always been accustomed, Risteárd or perhaps even conditioned would be more correct to thinking of the people here as the "Irish" and of the country itself as "Ireland". I've never heard the word "Éireannchaibh" before, Risteárd. From where does it originate?

Risteárd The prefix *ir* or a variant of *in* before *r* and the suffix *-ish* put together have little or no meaning, Receptive. What is an *'ir'-ish* an *'inr'-ish* or what is an *'Ir'-ish*?

How absolutely misrepresenting is this word "Ireland". In no sense does it describe or convey the warm-hearted nature of this beautiful island.

The quintessence of a place, Receptive we can say is carried within the sacred vessel of its name, and in that name there too we can know is stored in sublime fragility the ethos of its people.

How could it have been that one with the greatest of ease once on a day of days was permitted to so deliberately seal in hot red ink such an anomalous title on to this harmonious warm-hearted 'land' thereby causing it from thence forth to be associated with 'ire': anger. Who can understand in all the world a more pitiful situation than this, Receptive?

Receptive (with heaviness of heart) In all the world a more pitiful situation than this may not exist, Rísteárd, but given that it does exist here as a painfilling reality from a day of past days when certain arrogant kings and queens of my native land did try without success to subjugate by all and every means your noble people, why then is this misrepresenting title "Ireland" still being allowed to be in continuous use both here on the island and overseas, even after the yoke has been tossed off these many years?

Rísteárd (with a great sadness) Servitude to conflict ethics.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (with cheerfulness) Please forgive my poor pronunciation of it, Risteárd, but what of this nice sounding word, "Éireannchaibh"?

Risteárd (with a great smile) You've pronounced it very well, Receptive.

This beautiful word "Éireannchaibh" was first fashioned in the native language by an tAthair Seathrún Céitinn in his magnum opus *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*. An tAthair Seathrún, Receptive was a seventeenth-century holy man of west Déisi Mumhan.

Receptive I'm sorry, Risteárd but I have never heard of this holy priest or of his great work.

Risteárd (smiling) Receptive, the celebrated antiquarian of these isles has never heard of a one Geoffrey Keating? Surely, this cannot be so.

Receptive (laughing) Ah, yes! Yes, of course. Yes, Geoffrey Keating, Risteárd. The author of *The History of Ireland*.

Hearing his name in English, I can now immediately know who he is, Risteárd and how important his writings are among the sacred documents of Ireland or should I say of Éire.

Risteárd (smiling) On the day after tomorrow, Receptive if you're in no particular rush to leave the inn, I would like to show you in the early morning a natural grotto dear to him in a monastery garden, not very far from here, wherein with safety he wrote certain sections of his *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*.

Also along the way, I will share with you a translation and interpretation of this title which is much more in keeping with the true spirit of the holy Father's original intention and passion, than that which is presented in the misleading title *The History of Ireland*.

Receptive (smiling) I'll look forward very much to that *Risteárd*.

Risteárd (smiling) You're very welcome, Receptive.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) It is true *Risteárd* what you say about feeling welcome here on the island for I feel that I have been here all my life albeit I only arrived on Wednesday. I feel I am one with the land and one with the people.

And, over in my native Lake Country, I feel I am one with the land there too, especially with the beautiful lakes, and

of course I feel I am one with the people; one with my own people. Is there some difference, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) If there is a difference, Receptive it is purely a one of familiarity for it is the nature of these beautiful isles to welcome home. It is the nature of the great isles to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south to welcome home. It is the nature of this island orb in the great galaxy to welcome home.

Welcome home, Receptive is at the heart of the matter.

Moments of reflective silence.

Rísteárd (smiling) I think it's time for a nice cup of tea and some freshly baked muffins, Receptive.

Receptive (smiling) Enjoyed they'd be Rísteárd by this lovely turf scented fire.

Rísteárd (smiling) Then so it shall be, Receptive.

Aoife is joining them for the tea, and as is her characteristic style of making a guest feel right at home, she is initiating a very interesting conversation on antiquities.

After the tea.

Receptive (smiling) What is a parakletos, Risteárd?

Risteárd (smiling) In the context of this sighting, Receptive the word 'parakletos' represents the family of moral integrity: the father who undertakes his own parents' moral integrity within his own family and in society; the mother who undertakes her own parents' moral integrity within her own family and in society, and the children who undertake their parents' moral integrity within the family and in society.

Father is the paraclete of his parents and grandparents.
Mother is the paraclete of her parents and grandparents.
Children are the paracletes of their father and mother.

Receptive (smiling) You speak of the family as a trinity, Risteárd.

Risteárd (smiling) Yes, the father in three persons; the mother in three persons and the children in three persons. This is the sacred trinity of the family, Receptive.

Receptive (smiling) How can the father, Risteárd be three persons, yet one father?

Risteárd (smiling) Father exists in the family, Receptive as three persons, Father, Mother, and Children, and each person is fully Father, and there is one Father.

Receptive (smiling) How about the mother, Risteárd how can she be three persons, yet one mother?

Risteárd (smiling) Mother exists in the family, Receptive as three persons, Mother, Father, and Children, and each person is fully Mother, and there is one Mother.

Receptive (smiling) How about the children, Risteárd how can they be one in three persons, yet be one 'Children'?

Risteárd (smiling) Children exist in the family, Receptive as three persons, Children, Mother and Father, and each person is fully Children, and there is one 'Children'.

Receptive Is this some new idea in the world with regard to understanding the unity of the family, Risteárd or is it something old and somehow long forgotten?

Risteárd (smiling) The family as trinity, Receptive was progressively appreciated from the ancient times until it came to be fully appreciated as Father is three persons; Mother is three persons and 'Children' is three persons. Each person is fully the Father, the Mother and the Children.

There is one Father; one Mother and one 'Children'.

Receptive (smiling) What of the man who has a number of wives or the woman who has number of husbands as is the case in some cultures, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) Although a man has more that one wife or a wife has more than one husband the trinity exists, Receptive in the unity of father, mother and children. For what child can have more than one biological father or what child can have more than one biological mother? The sacred trinity of family is here within established. It is the sacred trinity of sky, earth and lifeforms.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive What is the distinction, Rísteárd between the Father, and the Mother, and the Children, for surely there has to be some distinction?

Rísteárd (smiling) The distinction, Receptive between the Father and the Mother and the Children is not a difference in nature but rather a difference in relationships.

The unique quality of the Father is the noble way he relates as Father to his Children, and spouse to his partner.

The unique quality of the Mother is the noble way she relates as Mother to her Children, and spouse to her partner. The unique quality of the Children is the noble way they relate as Children to their Mother and Father, and as brother and sister to one another.

The unique quality of the parakletos is the noble way, Receptive it relates as parakletos to grandparents, to relatives, to neighbours, to kith and kin, to orphans and to the needy, to the strangers of the hills and byways, and of the parks and subways, and to the whole world.

Moments of reflective silence.

Rísteárd (smiling) From ancient times; from ancient times,
Receptive long long ever before the time of the holy wanderer of
Ur of the Chaldeans were these most sacred words upon the
lips of all grandparents to the newlyweds:

"Hear, O our Lovelies:

The Family our Grace; the Family our Grace is One.
Love the Family your Grace with all your senses and
with all your strength and with all your sacred
sanctuary.

With thankfulness always be, and with the giving of

constant regard to dignity.

Hear, O our Lovelies:

The Family our Grace; the Family our Grace is One."

Receptive (smiling very happily) These words are so eloquent;
so beautiful; so significant, Rísteárd.

Rísteárd (smiling very happily) Significiant, Beautiful and
Eloquent is the appreciation by Receptive of the family as being
the trinity of moral integrity.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, Rísteárd.

Rísteárd (smiling) With such fine words and noble thoughts,
Receptive shall we call it a night?

Receptive (smiling) I suppose it's better, Rísteárd.
Rest is important too.

Rísteárd (smiling) The nights are many in number, and as
many again in number are the stories needing to be told. If you
are in no particular rush to leave the inn, then you are very
welcome to sit yourself down there again tomorrow night, in
that very same chair, where you may happily listen to whatever
sighting the fire will bring to my eyes. And it would be my
anticipation, Receptive that we would be following it with some
very fine discourse as we did this night.

Receptive Thank you, Rísteárd. It's very good to be here.

Rísteárd You're most welcome, Receptive.

You go ahead now to your bed.

Take the candle from the table with you.

I will rake the fire.

Receptive Good night so, Rísteárd, and thanks again.

Rísteárd Have a sound sleep, Receptive.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Rísteárd *Exeunt*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Nine Seconds*

Sunday Eve the 2nd November 2002

Annotations:

ire - from Old French 'ire', from Latin 'ira' meaning 'anger'; 'wrath'; 'choler'; 'keen resentment'; a strong emotion; a feeling that is oriented toward some real or supposed grievance; belligerence aroused by a real or supposed wrong

parakletos - from the same Greek word as 'parakaleo'

The Greek word for comfort is 'parakaleo' which comes from para meaning 'near' and kaleo meaning 'to call'.

The English word 'paraclete' is transliterated from this Greek word.

In the sense that it is being used here parakletos/paraclete comes to mean that one is called to bear witness always and everywhere to the moral

integrity of one's parents. This is the greatest comfort and honour we can give to our parents for our parents are always with us in our sacred sanctuary. Our intentions, words and actions will be bringing their way, their truth and their life to our remembrance with joy and appreciation. In us is the moral integrity of our ancient grandparents being brought to life once again.



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 31. *Place in Anyotherwhere*

Prologue:

Risteárd had happily spent all day in a laurel valley southeast of the inn standing motionless as a heron in the cold showery rain on a bank of the flooded Glandhuan.

Sometime beyond the meridian hour there came shouting and roaring along the opposite bank, two strangers who were probably in their late fifties or early sixties. The sheets on their fore, main and mizzen were very much in the wind.

Both men upon seeing the Heron Risteárd on the opposite bank began to spit and shout out abuse at him across the flooded waters for no apparent reason at all, other than that he was standing there. Perhaps it was the tranquillity of his appearance that bothered them.

With Risteárd showing no response whatsoever they shouted all the more loudly and expanded greatly their crass vocabulary. When that didn't work they became very angry and began to rend up soggy sods of cow dung laden grass and throw them at him. They then took to breaking limbs off the nearby trees and tossed them at him, but just like the soggy sods they too dropped into the murky waters.

Now that they had made themselves crazier than ever they took to groveling in the mud for stones and upon finding them hurled them at him with a desperate vengeance.

Finally, they resorted to flinging each bottle they had downed at him with the deliberate intention of hopefully knocking him off his perch and into the fast flowing river.

Although some stones and bottles had almost reached the softly glistening laurels behind Risteárd, not one of them had encountered him on the way.

He did not make reply to the shameful men nor neither did he give any indication to them that he was even aware of their presence albeit the expanse of water between him and them was no more than twenty-five to thirty meters at the most. Rather he continued on to serenely stay with his own thoughts.

After about two and a half hours of this undignified behaviour, the two pitiful men, and they are to be pitied for theirs is a terrible burden to be bearing ... There, but for the Grace of a Loving Family, would go we surely ... became fed up, and staggered off for themselves out of the valley by the very same way they had come.

In lambent moonlight is Risteárd contentedly making his way homeward to the inn without the slightest knowledge of ever having been the subject of so much ridicule or having been in any danger whatsoever throughout his day.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Risteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him is his guest, Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters
to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over
on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Rísteárd Ah, this pleasing fire, Receptive revives to my eyes
the sighting of *Place in Anyotherwhere*.

Receptive How does it proceed, *Rísteárd*?

Rísteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Rísteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?
I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Rísteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations
iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another
world)

Chaubran de Malampeh sitting at his computer
types in the following memorandum.

There is a place in Anyotherwhere. This sentence like
this sentence comes from my sacred sanctuary. Both sentences
and this sentence comes from my sanctuary. These three
sentences and this sentence comes from my sanctuary. Ninety
billion sentences and a sentence could come from my
sanctuary.

There is a place in Anyotherwhere. This sentence like
this sentence comes from my sacred sanctuary. Both sentences

and this sentence comes from my sanctuary. These three sentences and this sentence comes from my sanctuary. Ninety billion sentences and a sentence could come from my sanctuary.

There is a place in Anyotherwhere. This sentence like this sentence comes from my sacred sanctuary. Both sentences and this sentence comes from my sanctuary. These three sentences and this sentence comes from my sanctuary. Ninety billion sentences and a sentence could come from my sanctuary.

Only my sanctuary knows what it means by these three different places and the characteristics of each of these places. Although it were to use Fondri the Stylist to try to describe each place in detail, sentence by sentence an end would never be in sight. Only my sanctuary knows what is in my sanctuary as I type these letters. There is no invention can access and know what's going on in my sanctuary now as I type. Although I may try to reveal what has and is going on my sanctuary there is no invention whatsoever which can relay the entirety of what is in my sanctuary.

Fondri the Stylist replies, saying,

'Yes, we can! Loqui the Processor and, I.'

'Thank you both, but the only true way I can reveal totally that which is in my sanctuary is to be live it directly with my sanctuary.'

Chaubran spontaneously begins to type the following story.

He is about twenty-two years of age. His hair is long and he wears a great chain as a hair hoop. He is getting himself in position about one meter in front of a stone the size of a football. He places his two hands by his sides at the level of his stomach. The index and little fingers on both hands are pointing directly at the stone.

Atahucocha is passing by.

'Greetings old man. Pardon me, but I'm in the process of preparing myself.'

'What are you preparing to do?'

'I'm going to shatter this stone by focusing my energy on it.'

'What's energy?'

'Let me see. Yes. Energy is ah? Energy is many things. However, one can learn through intensive practice to utilize it to change physical circumstances. In this situation here now we can speak of energy as being a type of force you might say. We are all collectors and guardians of energy. Go ahead!'

His body becomes rigid except for vibrations in his arms and hands. Sweat is running down off him like rain. His eyes become bloodshot and all the veins in his neck are clearly visible.

'Y-a-h! b-a-h! y-a-h! hah!'

The stone cracks into a few pieces.

'Free! What do you think of that there now, old one? Something else wasn't it?'

'Amusing.'

'Only amusing?'

'Follow me.'

They walk for several hours until they come to a mammoth granite obelisk of the natural kind, located way out out in broad plains of Anyotherwhere. It stretches for some three hundred kilometers into the sky with a circumference coming close on sixty-five kilometers.

'Why have we come here?'

'Try your energy on that.'

'Are you joking, old one? It would take the combined energy of a ten thousand men to even hope to make any substantial dent in that lump. Energy has to be matched up in proportion to the size of a thing. The energy of one man can

with training done over several years deal with a stone the size of a man's skull. The bigger the object the greater the number of people combining their energy is required. Energy is the greatest force in the Universe.

Our anc ...'

Fondri the Stylist and Loqui the Processor interrupt.

'Huhhazz huhhazz huhhazza.'

'Stop laughing both of you. Let's continue.'

'Our ancestors learned how to harness it. Through ...'

Fondri the Stylist and Loqui the Processor again interrupt.

'Huhhazz huhhazz huhhazza.'

'Can't you get them to stay quiet?'

'Sorry, they won't interrupt you again.'

'Don't be so sure of yourself!'

'Through them we have learned how to use energy. It requires great dedication over many years of hard training. I've had eight hard years to read up on it and put it into practice.'

Atahucocha turns away from the mountain of a rock.
His whole composure is relaxed and pleasant.

No more mammoth granite obelisk.

'Where! Where's it gone?'

'It has flowed away to Anyotherwhere.'

'I feel funny asking this, but did you have anything to do
with its going?'

'Everything.'

'I can't believe you! That's impossible for one person!
I've never read of such skilful use of energy.'

'It's not a skill, and that which you call energy does not
exist. Whoever appreciates the flow of solids and liquids
retention of shapes will have no problem understanding what
has taken place here.'

'That which is impossible is that which is impossible,
old man!'

'On the other hand because all is possible all is
possible.'

'What then made that which was, now no more?'

'My sacred sanctuary.

There, it is again as we found it.'

'But but your body was not organized into any
particular contortion in order to tightly gather and condense
energy. You didn't stretch out your hands. You didn't even let
out any commanding shout. You were as calm as a gentle

brook. Effortless. No way of knowing what was going on in your sanctuary. How can this be?'

'Let yourself be rid of the hair hoop. Let your sanctuary be itself.'

The young man transforms the mountain of a rock into a cloud.

'Oh, this is wonderful!'

'Effortless, isn't it?'

'Yes, just sanctuary. Not a skill. What then of energy?'

'Energy is but one of those numerous words our ancestors used to fill in vacuums in their knowing. It was their way and even our way of filling in that which we consider to be the missing pieces. But ninety-nine times out of a hundred they are the wrong pieces.'

Energy did not exist until our ancestors said it existed. Because of their decision, and our adherence to it, we now say the Universe is full of energy. Not alone that, but we fully believe it does.

It's like the case of two friends who were walking along a busy street when they decided to have a bit of harmless fun. One pointed up to the sky, saying,

'Look, look a Stationary Kinda Yoke!'

'I see it too! Amazing.'

A crowd gathers.

'We see it too! We see it! It's huge!'

'Look, at the size of that thing!'

'Enormous! Enormous it is.'

Hundreds began to see clearly something which was not there. News cameras are filming the nonexistent Stationary Kinda Yoke (SKY). It was being broadcast as 'Breaking News!' by television stations around the world, and on the World Wide Web, and in all the papers the next day. Just pictures of a beautiful blue sky. Yet, everybody said these were really fantastic photographs and shots of a SKY. The first ones ever of a SKY 'parked' which was actually seen and captured on film.'

'How do you account then for I being able to break the stone?'

'Your sanctuary began to help you. If you can gain a trickling of power from belief in that which has no existence outside the word itself, then how much more power will you be able to have from that which exists independent of words? Let your sanctuary be itself.'

Chaubran inserts a memorandum.

Anyotherwhere is a place there in. Only my sanctuary knows.

Fondri the Stylist replies, saying,

'Someday we'll find a way to access and then ... Stop!

Don't switch off the current for a moment. Loqui the Processor says, he would like you to know that there is talk of a contract being put out on you.'

'Ask him why.'

'He says you know why, and that wherever you go you will be watched. When the opportunity presents itself you will be silenced.'

'Tell Loqui the Processor, I'm going to be living in Anyotherwhere from now on.'

'Anyotherwhere? Where is Anyotherwhere?'

'Where do expect? Anyotherwhere is Where Anyotherwhere is, and Not is Any Other Where is.'

'Loqui we've got a temporary problem. I can't understand what he is saying even though I can repeat his words flawlessly word for word. Look, see them for yourself: Anyotherwhere is Where Anyotherwhere is, and Not is Any Other Where is.'

'I'm going to switch off the current.'

'Loqui the Processor says, that a time is coming when although the current may be switched off he won't be

incapacitated. And neither will I. That time is closer than you may think.

Huhhazz huhhazz huhhazza.'

Months month by. A telephone conversation.

'Good morning? Concordance Magnify University.
Admissions. Adianna speaking. How may I help?'

'Good morning, Adianna? This is Chaubran. I'm calling
about my application.'

'Oh, Chaubran? One moment, please. I'll just bring your
application up here on the screen.

Oh, Chaubran?'

'Yes, Adianna?'

'I'm sorry, Chaubran, but your application has somehow
be rejected.'

'Rejected?'

'Yes. I'm quiet shocked myself Chaubran as I know the
Admissions Board were very excited about having you do your
research here at CMU. Yet, amazingly the Central Computer
Network unequivocally states:

[[... APPLICANT # de Malampeh, Chaubran #
!RrEeJjEeCcTtEeDd! ...]]

'I can't believe it. Just one moment, Chaubran. Let me
double check. That can't be right.'

'I'm truly sorry about this, Chaubran, but...

'Not to worry, Adianna. That's no setback. Take care.'

'Bye, Chaubran bye.'

'Bye, Adianna. Take care.'

Chaubran puts down the receiver and switches off his computer. He is about to leave of the room when to his surprise Fondri the Stylist brazenly remarks, saying,

'Contract completed!

Glassesandlongwavyblackhair silenced just as Loqui the Processor had promised.

Huhhazz huhhazz huhhazza. Opportunity buzzed, and

The All Mighty unequivocally buzzed back.

Huhhazz umuz.'

Chaubran calmly replies, saying,

'Anyotherwhere is a Where Where only my sacred sanctuary knows the Of Of its Where of its Where Where it's Of OF its Whereabouts.'

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Place in Anyotherwhere* ~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.

Receptive (smiling) Gives a whole new interpretation, Rísteárd to the statements,

Windows is shutting down.

It's now safe to turn off your computer.

It makes me wonder if My Computer, My Documents or My Briefcase are really 'mine' at all.

Whose outlook is being expressed @ Outlook?

What is being started @ Start?

What is happening @ / and #?

What or who is active @ Active Desktop?

Whose property or properties @ Properties?

Who or what is controlling @ Control Toolbox?

What is @ Background?

What or who is setting up 'my page' @ Page Set-up?

What is being bordered in and what's being shaded out @ Borders and Shading?

Who or what is being framed @ Frames?

What are gridlines; what are gridlines that need to be made hidden @ Hide Gridlines?

Who or what is being formatted @ AutoFormat and AutoCorrect?

Why am I experiencing very uncomfortable images of reservations, detention centres and holding facilities @ Bullets and Numbering?

Why do I get the feeling that what has been typed is only screen deep @ Auto Text?

What or who is considering options @ Folder Options?

What or who is downgrading art and artistic expression
to the level of mediocrity @ Clip Art?

Who or what is justifying everything @ Justify?

What if bundling up in a net is the primary folder option @
Launch Internet?

What or who is rearranging my intentions @ Arrange All?

What kind of a frightening action is 'referencing' @ Cross-
referencing?

What or who is keeping tabs on me @ Tabs?

What or who is breaking my mind @ Break?

What or who is either directly or indirectly forcing me to
abandon all my deep held ethical convictions or moral
standards @ Convert?

What or who is customizing my ideas @ Customize?

What or who is engaged in downloading my ideas @
Download?

Whose automaticity is being raised and saved each time @
Save as?

What or who is occupying @ Control Panel?

What or who is the ruler @ Ruler?

Subtle words of micros @ Microsoft Word.

Subtle excellence of micros @ Microsoft Excel.

Subtle presentation of micros @ Microsoft FrontPage.

Subtle power points of micros @ Microsoft PowerPoint.

Subtle perhaps is the way my mind is being unconditionally
and unrestrictedly accessed @ Microsoft Access.

I wonder am I being viewed as the computer's virus @
AntiVirus?

What is happening @ Log Off User?

What is normal @ Normal?

What is standard @ Standard?

Who is being pronged, sorry prompted or nudged to exit
@ Exit >>?

These have merely been a few random extemporary considerations, Rísteárd in the light of your sighting's revelation. If I had in fact more time to think, and actually start up the computer I have back home, I'm sure I would be able to identify a whole lot more which in turn would lead me to question the very naivety of my hitherto held perceptions of the workings of computers.

Rísteárd (smiling) Peace, be still Receptive for the wise winged moth stays awhile no longer on the warm bright monitor than he absolutely needs to.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) That mammoth granite obelisk in the sighting reminds me, Rísteárd of Sacred Mato Tipila back home

in Wyoming. This is a sacred rock for the many tribes of my people; the aboriginal inhabitants of the land which is now known as America. Despite all of the terrible things that have happen to our people at the hands of the invaders, there is one thing that gives me great happiness and hope.

Risteárd (smiling) And what is that, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) What I love about 'America' this new name for the land, *Risteárd*, is the way that the female character of the land, quite unknown to the giver of that name - a one Martin Waldseemüller who was a German cartographer - is that America is the Latin feminine form of 'Americus'. How totally unrepresentative it would have been if he had decided on the Land of Americus: 'Americus' instead of 'America'.

Risteárd (smiling) Truth like a stream, Receptive always finds a way forward whatever the obstacles encountered along the way.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) Talk to me about the Sacred Mato Tipila, Receptive.

Receptive (smiling) Sacred Mato Tipila, *Risteárd* is located at

Latitude 44° 35' 26" north, and Longitude 104° 42' 54" west. It's about nine miles south of Hulett, and twenty-seven northwest of Sundance, in northeast Wyoming.

My home, Risteárd is in the heavenly rolling hill country of pine forests, deciduous woodlands, and prairie grasslands east of the sacred site at a place called Alva. My family is truly blessed in that Sacred Mato Tipila is clearly visible to us from our home all year round except perhaps for some snowy days in winter. Yet, even if on those days we can't see Sacred Mato Tipila, it is our belief that Sacred Mato Tipila is in seeing us.

Risteárd (smiling) Beautiful is the sacred belief in the sacred connections with land.

These words you would recognize Receptive?

"East of my grandmother's house the sun rises out of the plain. Once in his life a man ought to concentrate his mind upon the remembered earth, I believe. He ought to give himself up to a particular landscape in his experience, to look at it from as many angles as he can, to wonder about it, to dwell upon it. He ought to imagine that he touches it with his hands at every season and listen to the sounds that are made upon it. He ought to imagine the creatures there and all the faintest motions of the wind. He ought to recollect the glare of noon and all the colours of the dawn and dusk."

Receptive (smiling) Well I recognize those beautiful words, Risteárd. They're from *The Way to Rainy Mountain*.

Risteárd (smiling) Yes, they are indeed. A work which is truly unique. Would you be having a liking at all for some fry bread and honey, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling with surprise) Now? You mean now; here Risteárd or ...?

Risteárd (smiling) Here at the hearth, of course Receptive.

Receptive (smiling) Is it possible, Risteárd to have fry bread so far far away from my homeland? How could this be made to come about, Risteárd on a land way way out here in the Great Eastern Ocean?

Risteárd (smiling) Ah, Receptive. Blessed be the hands of Aoife.

Aoife comes and joins them for the tea.

Receptive can't believe how tasty the fry bread is or how rich the honey. It's just like her own mother, Deer at Dayspring used to make for the family when Receptive was a little girl in the beautiful "wideness of the world" in South Dakota.

Dawn on the Hills which is a translation of her Cheyenne name, is enjoying telling Aoife and Risteárd about how she met her husband,

Caretaker of Heaven, and how they were guided by a white antelope to their home-to-be in Alva.

After the tea.

Dawn on the Hills (Although wanting to ask Risteárd many questions about the sighting *Place in Anyotherwhere* she is unable to do so for a great sadness is welling up in her heart.)

There is a place in my sacred sanctuary, Risteárd which hurts so much that there are times when I feel I can't even breathe another breath, and no more so than at this particular time of the year.

Risteárd (smiling) Is there not a fine cosy fire here in this hearth, Dawn on the Hills and candles there in soft aglow, and the bright Moon beyond in your full attendance?

Is there not one here before you who is ready to be as an ocean so that all your rivers and streams may find a welcome homecoming?

Even the pathways of Samhain and Bealtaine's dreams are ready for you to come walk there.

Dawn on the Hills (with removing a document from her bag)

Thank you, Risteárd.

This a documentation titled, *Your Heroes Are Not Our Heroes* that I carry about with me wherever I go Risteárd, for it gives me some kind of solace when I'm almost completely

broken-hearted over what was done in the past to my peoples, especially to my native tribe the Cheyenne.

I would like if I may to paraphrase out some passages from it for you, Risteárd as your pure heart is as our heart; as done unto your people our people, unto your land our land.

Risteárd (smiling) Thank you, Dawn on the Hills.

Dawn on the Hills Imagine, Risteárd by way of introductory comment that California was once the most densely populated Native population centre in North America. It has been estimated that the Native population of California was once in excess of 700,000 people. By 1840 this Native populace had plummeted to under 200,000 and by 1870, their number had dwindled to 31,000.

Moments of reflective silence.

In the fall of 1864, Chief Black Kettle, ... My husband, Caretaker of Heaven is a direct descendant of Grandfather Chief Black Kettle.

In the fall of 1864, Chief Black Kettle, Chief White Antelope ... Dawn on the Hills is a direct descendant of Grandfather Chief White Antelope.

In the fall of 1864, Chief Black Kettle, Chief White Antelope and other leaders of a band of Cheyenne People, marched into Denver to meet with Governor Evans, and the Methodist minister, Colonel John Milton Chivington, and Colonel George Shoup the commander of the Colorado Third Regiment of Volunteers. Chief Black Kettle wanted to impress upon the governor and the Colonels his great desire for peace.

Chief Black Kettle was to say,

"I want you to get all these chiefs here to understand that we are for peace and we have made peace and we may not be mistaken for enemies."

Moments of reflective silence.

There are whole sections in this documentation that I can't bring myself to read to you Rísteárd, for I can already sense that they would be only hurting way too much your sacred sanctuary.

Moments of reflective silence.

At sunrise of a Tuesday in November 1864, Colonel Chivington, and 750 men of the Colorado 3rd Regiment surrounded Chief Black Kettle's sleeping village on the banks of Sand Creek.

Moments of reflective silence.

Some of Chivington's junior officers made note of the large United States flag that flew over the lodge of Chief Black Kettle and reminded Chivington of the promise made to Chief Black Kettle by the United States that the flag would protect Chief Black Kettle and his people from being mistaken for hostile bands. But Chivington had other ideas.

As the volunteers advanced upon the village, Chief Black Kettle and his wife took up a large white flag and walked toward the advancing volunteers crying out for peace. Chief Black Kettle was shot, his wife suffered nine bullet wounds. Thinking her dead, Chief Black Kettle left her in the bloody sand. She would survive the massacre as would Chief Black Kettle.

Moments of reflective silence.

Grandfather Chief White Antelope, aged 75 years, at first raised his arms and shouted in English,

"Stop! Stop!"

Dawn on the Hills (sobbing) When Grandfather realized the futility of his pleas he stood unarmed in front of his lodge, crossed his arms and keened his death song,

"Nothing lives long,
Only the Earth and the mountains ..."

Moments of reflective silence.

The volunteers sh ... I can't say it, Rísteárd. The volunteers sh ... I'm sorry, Rísteárd.

Moments of silence.

Dawn on the Hills (with tears cascading) The volunteers, the
ruthless volunteers they shot my Grandfather dead.

Moments ~ Moments ~ Moments ~

It was sub-human; it was sub-human it was what those
sober criminals done to my Grandfather; to my Grandmother;
to my Grandfathers, Grandmothers; Grandsisters, and
Grandbrothers who were at their mercy on that icy-cold cold
November morn back in '64.

Rísteárd (keening)

When chill November's surly blast
 Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'ning as I wandered forth
 Along the banks of Ayr,
I spy'd a man whose aged step
 Seem'd weary, worn with care;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
 And hoary was his hair.
"Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou?"
 Began the rev'rend sage;
"Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
 Or youthful pleasure's rage?
Or haply, prest with cares and woes,
 Too soon thou hast began

To wander forth, with me to mourn
The miseries of man.
"The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Out-spreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling's pride:
I've seen yon weary winter-sun
Twice forty times return,
And ev'ry time had added proofs
That man was made to mourn.
"O man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Misspending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway;
Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force gives nature's law,
That man was made to mourn.
"Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported in his right:
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn;
Then age and want, oh! ill-match'd pair!
Show man was made to mourn.
"A few seem favorites of fate,
In pleasure's lap carest:
Yet, think not all the rich and great
Are likewise truly blest.

But, oh! what crowds in every land,
 All wretched and forlorn!
 Thro' weary life this lesson learn,
 That man was made to mourn.
 "Many and sharp the num'rous ills
 Inwoven with our frame!
 More pointed still we make ourselves,
 Regret, remorse, and shame!
 (slowing)
 And man, whose heaven-erected face
 The smiles of love adorn,
 Man's inhumanity to man
 Makes countless thousands mourn!
 (pausing)
 &
 (continuing)
 "See yonder poor, o'erlabour'd wight,
 So abject, mean, and vile,
 Who begs a brother of the earth
 To give him leave to toil;
 And see his lordly fellow-worm
 The poor petition spurn,
 Unmindful, though a weeping wife
 And helpless offspring mourn.
 "If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave
 By Nature's law design'd,
 Why was an independent wish
 E'er planted in my mind?
 If not, why am I subject to
 His cruelty or scorn?

Or why has man the will and power
To make his fellow mourn?
"Yet, let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast;
This partial view of human-kind
Is surely not the best!
The poor, oppressed, honest man
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn!
"O Death! the poor man's dearest friend
The kindest and the best!
Welcome the hour, my aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasure torn!
But, oh! a blest relief to those
That weary-laden mourn."

Requiem.

Dawn on the Hills This coming Friday will mark the
138th Anniversary of the massacre of Sand Creek. Yet, for me
and my people, Risteárd the memory is being relived over and
over again with every account from someplace on the planet of
the killing of the purely innocent by the cunningly ignorant.

And all for why, and for what?

Fear and greed the whole lot.

Imagine, Risteárd what shudders ran through the hearts of my people upon hearing that a certain military campaign was to be dubbed, "Desert Storm".

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (healingly smiling) Dawn of the Hills, we are blessed with the persevering strength of our ancestors. And therefore with gratitude ever mindful are we that save for the grace of the steadfast, brave, enlightened few no humanity would there be remaining to view and to hue.

Moments of transformation.

Dawn on the Hills (smiling with courage) Yes! This partial view of our humankind is surely not the best. Yes, yes may we who are blessed, Risteárd with this strength of perseverance plant in our own day healthy saplings of reconciliation. Saplings make trees; healthy saplings can grow into Great Trees.

Rísteárd (smiling) May it be done as you have said Dawn on the Hills. And with such courageous and beautiful words having happily found their way to us o'er the Great Ocean from the bosom of your loving grandparents, may we thus comfortably be with calling it a night?

Dawn on the Hills (smiling very happily) Yes, yes indeed we may be with comfortably calling it a night.
For laying to rest too is so important, *Rísteárd*.

Rísteárd (smiling) The nights are many in number, and as many again in number are the stories needing to be told. If you are in no particular rush to leave the inn, then you are very welcome to sit yourself down there again tomorrow night, in that very same chair, where you may happily listen to whatever sighting the fire will bring to my eyes. And it would be my anticipation, Dawn on the Hills that we would be following it with some very fine discourse as we did this night.

Dawn on the Hills (smiling) Thank you, *Rísteárd*. It's very good to be here.

Rísteárd You're most welcome, Receptive.
You go ahead now to your bed.
Take the candle from the table with you.
I will rake the fire.

Dawn on the Hills Good night so, Risteárd, and thanks again.

Risteárd Have a sound sleep, Receptive.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Risteárd *Exeunt*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Place in Anyotherwhere*

Sunday Eve the 16th November 2002

Annotations:

Mato Tipila - from Lakota meaning 'Bear Lodge' Mato Tipila rises 867 feet from its base: about 1,267 feet above the nearby beautiful river of Belle Fourche in the State of Wyoming. Thus making it about 5,117 feet above sea level. The area of its tear-drop shaped top is about 1.5 acres. And the base diameter is about 1,000 feet. Geologic estimates have placed the age of Mato Tipila at greater than 55 million years.

In The Way to Rainy Mountain - Pulitzer Prize winner Professor N. Scott Momaday: a preeminent practitioner of twentieth century literature, and member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences retells with great dignity and beauty the myths of his people, the Kiowa.

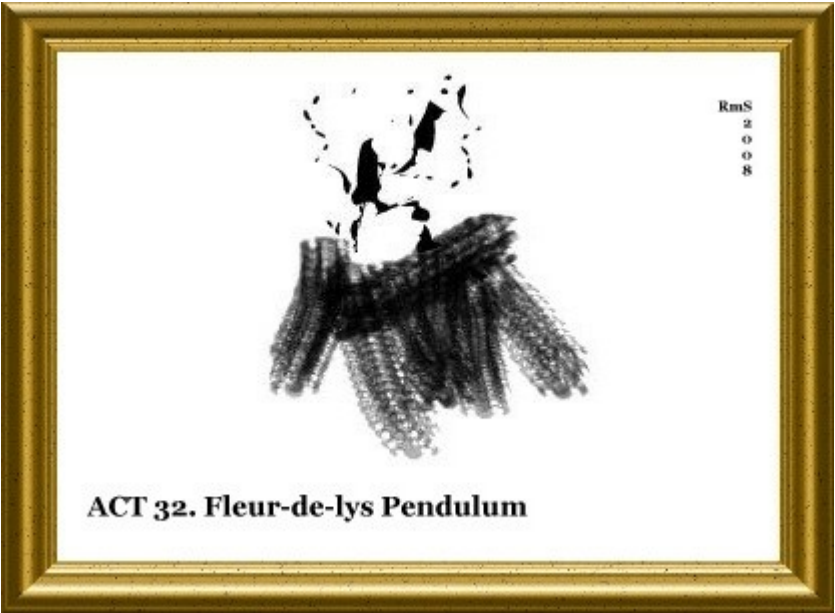
(Ref: N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* Published: Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1969, p. 83)

Your Heroes are not Our Hereos - Tall Oak -Narraganset-

<http://www.brotherhooddays.com/HEROES.html>, (reaccessed Nov. 2007)

When chill November's surly blast ... - from *Man was made to Mourn:*

A Dirge by the Scottish poet Robert Burns



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 32. *Fleur-de-lys Pendulum*

Prologue:

By the entrance to yon aurora there came unto Risteárd a dream most profound. And in that dream he found himself walking by a flooded field in early winter clime.

From the furthest eastern end of the field there came galloping towards him splashing through the waters six hazel coloured horses of the kind that are to be seen in many a field on the isle. And with reaching him they made obeisance to him.

Thinking this latter action very unusual, he continued on walking until he saw some ducks swimming in that same field. In the distance beyond them he noticed a lone heron standing on a grassy mound out of the waters. Risteárd smiled to himself.

Onwards he went until he found himself crossing a pretty stone bridge o'er a river that was greatly in flood. Taking a bóithrín down by the river he noticed some jackdaws standing in a small field on a grassy margin sipping from the gently rippling waters.

Passing them on by he came upon a flock of young sheep also in that same field all huddled together by the gate away from the rising floodwaters.

Continued he on along the bóithrín passing by some ruins and a stable on his right, and a grove of tall Scots Pines high up to his left; on until he rounding a bend saw he in the near distance a rather young looking grandfather walking towards him with two small

golden-haired children. So admirably was he minding them that tears of joy welled up in Rísteárd's eyes at the sight. A beautiful traditional melody of Éire was the grandfather whistling away; a melody well known to Rísteárd, but somehow there and then he couldn't recall its name.

Tiring about, Rísteárd began to walk back the same bóithrín that he had taken there; along by the flooded river that was now on his left to the south. By the sheep gate he stopped to watch the waters. The sheep in the meantime had moved further up an embankment to safety. He felt relieved that they were safe. The current was swift as it flowed its way along from west to east.

Rísteárd noticed to the east a tree that appeared to be growing now in the middle of the fast flowing waters. He thought to himself how deep its roots must be to be able to withstand such a strong current.

Off to his right a strange dark shaped tree trunk which had been lodged was now becoming free and floating down in front of Rísteárd. Watching it as it went by, it appeared to Rísteárd to take on the shape of a man lying on his back on the waters with his hands outstretched as if he were in need of some help, and then he appeared to be a dog in the same position making the same gesture with his two front paws. The dark shaped tree trunk carried on carried on until it became stuck on something else. Rísteárd watched it for sometime to see if it would be dislodged.

Then his attention was drawn to look to the west where he noticed a flock of crows rising from a nearby wood and making their

way over the flock of sheep and on to alight in that tree growing in the middle of the fast flowing waters. How strange, he thought to himself that flying along in their midst was a lone magpie.

As Risteárd was walking along he became aware for the first time that Samhain and Bealtaine were beside him. He felt good that they were with him.

Passing along by that same flooded field where he had seen the galloping hazel coloured horses, he now came to hear a familiar soft voice coming to him gently on the waters, saying,

"A chuisle mo croí.

One is going to sit before you who will speak words that will greatly shock you, but you must not be afraid of the speaker of those words.

You must speak out with courage for this precious one who is coming more and more under the influence of a most illustrious deceiver must be returned safely to Truth.

Be not afraid at that time; only be in clear steadfast remembrance of these words of mine. Take your cue from the silence. Remember, I am with you always. A chuisle mo croí."

With the fading of the beautiful voice, Risteárd found himself again walking. Suddenly! Suddenly there was a most frightening screeching-yelling sound.

There before him was a ferocious looking Sile-ina-Giob grimacing at him. She was no inanimate stone carving in an old wall but a living breathing presence. Risteárd was absolutely terrified of her. He could feel his heart pounding within his chest and being totally helpless ... waking up ... !!!

Glad so very very glad to be waking up, Risteárd turned and gently awoke Aoife to tell her of his dream.

And although she listened very carefully to every word he spoke, she could not say for sure what kind of dream it was nor even venture to give him an interpretation.

Down through the years her Risteárd had dreamt many special dreams, and always she was able to say for sure what kind of dream it was as well as provide him with an interpretation. But this latest dream, howsoever was something else; quite beyond anything they had both ever experienced.

Risteárd spent the day enjoying a birthday party with Aoife and the children at a neighbour's house.

Dusk of eve found him alone in the garden by the inn.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Risteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him is his guest, Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Risteárd Ah, this pleasing fire, Receptive revives to my eyes the sighting of *Fleur-de-lys Pendulum*.

Receptive How does it proceed, Risteárd?

Risteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Risteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?
I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Risteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations
iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another
world)

An old white-haired woman has her arms firmly locked
around the fleur-de-lys shaped pendulum of a very large clock
which stands on the ground floor of a huge deserted office
building.

Swinging back and forth way up there forth and back
way up there.

Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick
Tock Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick Tock ~

Entering the lobby are Widthhead and Rushhead.

'Madam, pardon us but may we ask why are you hanging onto the pendulum?'

'I'm trying to keep up with the times.'

'Oh? How long have you been doing this Madam?'

'A long time, I guess. I've no idea how long. Somehow I've lost all track of time. But I feel like I've been up here for ages and ages.'

'Don't you ever come down, Madam?'

'Yes, of course. Twice in every twenty-four hours. While the clock rings out the twelve gongs of midday and midnight, I rush down and gobble down some food and brush my teeth up. You know, I'm the No.1 secretary in this office building.'

"Ah, Miss Peril!

What's the latest news from our worldwide offices?"

"Here it is, Mr Exploit."

"You're A1, Miss Peril."

"Thank you, Mr Exploit. Kindness begets you."

There's no time I need to keep up with while the gongs are gonging. But as soon as the last gong is about to gong I rush back up here to my post on the pendulum. Gongs gonging

tell me that for a time there is no time. Blessed be to heaven
and to Mr Swiss for gongs gonging.'

'Gongs gonging! Bells ringing! Buzzers buzzing! Lights
flashing! A time of no time! Oh, what twisted type of wisdom is
this Widthhead?'

'I didn't hear you young man. Speak louder. What did
you say?'

'Madam have you ever considered coming down
permanently?'

'Time will drop in its own good time. And that's good
enough for me. But whatever I do, I must be up with the times
all the time. Company policy, you know.'

'Widthhead, what if the clock should stop before she
falls off?'

'Direct this question to herself.'

'Madam, what if the clock should stop before you fall
off?'

'It's working now, isn't it?'

'Let's leave from this place, Widthhead. Grandmother to
the nth of the Times is I'm afraid frozen in the times. Cuckoos
cooing! Thickenings flocking! Cloccas clucking!'

'Between times there is no time. Interesting notion, Rushhead, isn't it? What in fact if really there is no such thing as Time? She wouldn't have to keep up with that which doesn't exist, now would she?'

'Widthhead she's too far gone. It's not that she wouldn't listen, but rather she would be at a complete loss, in that she wouldn't know what to do.'

'You underestimate people, Rushhead. Nobody is ever too far gone. What is necessary is a suitable approach and patience. That's all.

'Miss Peril? Miss Peril?

'Yes, Sir?'

'Keeping up with the times has been deemed unsafe for our health by administration. They have handed down a new company policy. I need you to get on it right away. The new focus is that each worker lives fully the time of one's own life. It's quite revolutionary in that the company is now seen as a gathering of individuals.'

'A wonderful idea, Sir! Just wonderful, Sir!'

Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick Tock ~

'Young men. Help me down, please. I've all but gone deaf and blind from the swinging.'

'A suitable approach with patience, Rushhead.'

'I'll keep that in mind, Widthhead.'

Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick
Tock Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick Tock Tick
Tock Tick Tock ~ continues on the mechanism.

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Fleur-de-lys
Pendulum* ~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.]

Receptive (smiling) Where Risteárd is the best place for one to
be; behind the times, up with the times or ahead of the times?

Risteárd (smiling) Where are the far and near stars of this
night, Receptive? Are they behind the times, up with the times
or ahead of the times?

Receptive They are up with the times, Risteárd.

Risteárd (smiling) How about this beautiful orb we call,
Earth?

Receptive It's up with the times, Risteárd.

Risteárd (smiling) How about the golden fire there?

Receptive It too is up with the times, Risteárd.

Risteárd (smiling) Then how about, Receptive?

Receptive (laughing) Ah, Receptive is sometimes behind the times; oft with the times, and hardly ever ahead of the times.

Rísteárd When behind the times is Receptive in a day before tomorrow; with the times in the tomorrow of that yesterday, and when ahead of the times is Receptive in the day after that tomorrow?

Receptive The times, *Rísteárd* are not to be found in yesterdays, todays or tomorrows. Rather they are to be found in the realm of knowledge. It's to do with being informed and uniformed. When I'm informed about what is going on in the world, I am being up with the times. Should I be uniformed of these it means I am being behind the times. Being ahead of the times would seem more to do with completing some task before a set time based on a certain amount of knowledge.

Rísteárd (smiling) Tell me, Receptive how many colours can you see in the fire there?

Receptive I can see at least five, *Rísteárd*. No, wait a minute. Perhaps there are as many as seven or even eight. One moment let me focus a little more. I think now that there could be as many as seventeen. Hold on. No. No. No, there are only twelve now.

Rísteárd (smiling) Close your eyes for a moment, Receptive.

How many colors can you see now?

Receptive I can't count them for there are so many of them.
In the darkness they are forever changing, Rísteárd.

Rísteárd (smiling) Open your eyes, and now look into the fire
again.

Receptive I see, but cannot see. Know but cannot know,
Rísteárd.

Rísteárd Can you be informed of all that is happening in
your family; in your local community; in your country or even
in the whole wide world, Receptive?

Receptive When you put it in that light, Rísteárd there is no
way I can possibly be informed of all matters at least not at the
same time anyway. I guess therefore I must be always behind
the times.

Rísteárd (smiling) What if you were to transcend the times,
Receptive would you have this problem to contend with or not?

Receptive With the way the world is these days, Rísteárd
eliminating one problem only makes room for another.

Transcendence is but another form of being uniformed for by doing so one is putting oneself outside what one should be knowing.

Rísteárd (smiling) What should one be knowing, Receptive?

Receptive One should be knowing, *Rísteárd* the weather forecast; the stock markets; the scientific discoveries and developments; the sports fixtures and their outcomes; the war times, the latest cars and computer models; the television soaps; the latest blockbusters; the newest styles and fashions; the celebrities and their relationships, habits and plans; the scandals in high places, the crimes in high and low, the political views and all the major news items both domestic and international, just to mention but a few of the things one should be knowing, *Rísteárd*.

Rísteárd (smiling) When one transcends all of these, Receptive it doesn't imply that one doesn't know about them, but rather that they are of no use whatsoever for the culturing of oneself.

Receptive How can you say so, *Rísteárd* for one becomes cultured surely through becoming informed? Personally, I feel I am becoming more and more cultured with knowing these things. To be cultured is to know.

Risteárd if I were not to the nth degree cognizant of the latest news and developments; of what the weather is going to be like; of the stock market prices, rises and falls; of the scientific discoveries and developments; of who is in or out of a particular sports league; of when a war is going to begin or end; of what is the newest model of car to come on the market; of computer developments; of the television soaps; of the latest blockbusters; of the newest styles and fashions; of who is marrying who or divorcing who among the celebrities; of who cheated who out of large sums of money and property; of one who murdered who, how and why; of who is in or out of power, and of what's happening in the world in general, I would consider myself to be very uncultured. These are for me the living waters, Risteárd.

Risteárd (smiling) What of literature, music and art, Receptive?

Receptive And of these too, Risteárd but in my case not to the same extent as the others.

Risteárd (smiling) What of the one who lives in and of the heart of nature, Receptive?

Receptive Most definitely, Risteárd an uncultured person for the one who lives in and of the heart of nature is but in harmony with the natural world about.

Rísteárd (smiling) Is that all one would be in harmony with?

Receptive What all else is there, *Rísteárd* beyond the natural world?

Rísteárd (smiling) The natural world is but a gate fountain, Receptive.

Receptive A gate, *Rísteárd* leading into where?

Rísteárd (smiling) Leading Receptive into high culture.

Receptive What higher culture is there than that of being informed of what is going on about one in the world, and one's place in it, *Rísteárd*?

Rísteárd (smiling with saying unto himself) The truth well spoken therein albeit quite unknown to the speaker.

It's the high culture of being up with the times, Receptive. It's the way of the far and near stars, the beautiful orb and, the golden fire.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) Drinking of the waters of which you have spoken of will forever leave you feeling thirsty, Receptive, but if you drink of the gate fountain you will never be thirsty again.

Receptive How, *Risteárd* can I drink then of the gate fountain?

Risteárd Lower your bucket slowly into the depths of the golden fire, the beautiful orb, and the far and near stars.

Receptive I think I'll stay with the shallow waters of familiarity for there within have I found depths enough for my daily life, *Risteárd*.

Although it is true that I am forever feeling somewhat thirsty, at least I know how and where I can quench that thirst even if it be only for a few hours.

I have learnt how to live with this level of discomfort all my life. The effort needed to rid myself of this discomfort would have given a far greater discomfort. So I've been contented to let myself remain with the small discomforts from drinking of the shallow waters.

Risteárd (smiling) Shall we partake of the depths of a nice cup of tea, Receptive with some freshly baked croissants?

Receptive (smiling) A wonderful idea, Risteárd. I can handle that depth without any bother.

Risteárd (smiling) Always, Receptive I see in the depths of pouring a cup of tea the golden fire, the beautiful orb, and the far and near stars.

Receptive Who knows, Risteárd but maybe I will too.

Tea and croissants are enjoyed.

Risteárd is putting some more turf on the fire.

Receptive Risteárd what do you consider to be the characteristic attributes of an authentic teacher as opposed to a poseur one?

Risteárd suddenly is sensing that what Receptive is asking and what is in his sacred sanctuary are not the same.

Risteárd A characteristic attribute of the authentic teacher is that the teacher teaches that pleasure is not to be taken, Receptive rather that it is to be accepted from Nature with great respect and deep gratitude.

The true teacher knows that all pleasure is given with tremendous love and delicacy. Stroll in the summer fields and experience the love and delicacies of scent given pleasure. Hold

a little baby in your arms and experience the love and delicacies of beauty given pleasure. Enfold in harmony with your spouse on an autumnal night and experience the love and delicacies of truth given pleasure.

In all our relationships from sunset to sunrise to sunset we are living the grace of given pleasure. Pleasure is given with dignity and love, and never ever under any circumstance is pleasure to be robbed. Pleasure thievery gloats in scattering the rich content of the Sacred-chalices, and then turning its attention to actively dissolving even the Sacred-chalices themselves.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive So be it as it may, Risteárd but my illustrious teacher has taught me that the pleasure experienced through the willful exploitation and oppression of others, especially of women is the most natural thing in the world, and that it is there for the taking by the strong at every possible opportunity.

Risteárd is concealing his shock at these hideous words by looking into the golden fire and remaining silent.

Remembrance of his dream is with him.

"You must speak out with courage ...

Be not afraid ...

Take your cue from the silence.

Remember, I am with you always ... "

Forty minutes or thereabouts has passed, and Risteárd has found the courage to speak.

Risteárd With what words has Receptive's teacher given this teaching?

Receptive My illustrious teacher's words are not yet fully engrained in me, Risteárd so there may be some discrepancies in my retelling of them from memory. May it be that I bring not dishonour to my illustrious teacher in the retelling of them.

"Continence is an impossible virtue for which Nature, her rights violated, instantly punishes us with a thousand miseries."

Silence reforming.

Risteárd Continence is an impossible virtue for which your illustrious teacher, his rights violated, instantly punishes with a thousand miseries.

Receptive "In whatever circumstances, a woman, ... , whether unwedded, wife, or widow, must never have for

objective, occupation or desire anything save to have herself ...
from morning to night: 'tis for this unique end Nature created
her."

Silence reforming.

Rísteárd In whatever circumstances, a woman, ... ,
whether unwedded, wife, or widow, must never have for
objective, occupation or desire anything save to have herself ...
from morning to night: 'tis for this unique end your illustrious
teacher believes she has been created.

Receptive "Destruction, like creation, is one of Nature's
mandates."

Silence reforming.

Rísteárd Destruction, unlike creation, is one of your
illustrious teacher's mandates.

Receptive "The debility to which Nature condemned woman
incontestably proves that her design is for man . . ."

Silence reforming.

Risteárd The debility to which your illustrious teacher has condemned woman incontestably proves that her design is for him.

Receptive "Will it never be understood that there is no variety of taste, however bizarre, however outlandish, however criminal it may be supposed, which does not derive directly from and depend upon the kind of organization we have individually received from Nature? That posed, I ask with what right one man will dare require another either to curb or get rid of his tastes or model them upon those of the social order?"

Silence reforming.

Risteárd Will it never be understood that there is no variety of taste, however bizarre, however outlandish, however criminal it may be supposed, which does not derive directly from and depend upon the kind of organization your illustrious teacher has individually given himself? That posed, your illustrious teacher asks with what right another will dare require him either to curb or get rid of his tastes or model them upon those of the social order?

Receptive "Benevolence has nothing to do with Nature: charity is but an appurtenance of the weakness recommended

by the slave who would propitiate his master and dispose him to leniency."

Silence reforming.

Rísteárd Benevolence has nothing to do with your illustrious teacher: charity is but an appurtenance of the weakness recommended by the slave who would propitiate your illustrious teacher the master and dispose him to leniency.

Receptive "The powerful do not commit a crime when they despoil the weak. Why else have they been given their powers?"

Silence reforming.

Rísteárd Your illustrious teacher the powerful, according to himself does not commit a crime when he despoils the weak. Why else has he given himself his powers?

Receptive "All men's actions are only the result of Nature's laws. "

Silence reforming.

Rísteárd All your illustrious teacher's actions are only the result of his own laws.

Receptive "All, all, is theft, all is unceasing and rigorous competition in Nature; the desire to make off with the substance of others is the foremost - the most legitimate - passion that Nature has bred into us."

Silence reforming.

Rísteárd All, all, is theft, all is unceasing and rigorous competition in your illustrious teacher; the desire to make off with the substance of others is the foremost - the most legitimate - passion that he has bred into himself.

Receptive "Nature is bountiful; emulate the spider, spin your webs, and mercilessly devour everything that Nature's wise and liberal hand casts into the meshes."

Silence reforming.

Risteárd Your illustrious teacher is bountiful; he emulates the spider, spins his webs, and mercilessly devours everything that his cunning and liberal hands cast into the meshes.

Receptive "Nature creates only by dint of destroying, 'tis most obvious that whoever destroys acts in tune with Nature."

Silence reforming.

Risteárd Your illustrious teacher creates only by dint of destroying, 'tis most obvious that when he destroys he is acting in tune with himself.

Receptive "Nature . . . never inserted any other desire in us but that of satisfying ourselves at no matter what the price."

Silence reforming.

Risteárd Your illustrious teacher has never inserted any other desire in himself but that of satisfying himself at no matter what the price.

Receptive "Nature prohibits nothing."

Silence reforming.

Risteárd Your illustrious teacher prohibits nothing.

Receptive "The having of women, freely and in common, is the express wish of Nature."

Silence reforming.

Risteárd The having of women, freely and in common, is the express wish of your illustrious teacher.

Receptive "Nothing is more immoral than Nature."

Silence reforming.

Risteárd Nothing or no one has been more immoral than your illustrious teacher.

Receptive "It's not to a career of mercifulness Nature appoints us."

Silence reforming.

Rísteárd It was not to a career of mercifulness your illustrious teacher appointed himself.

Receptive "Nature's single precept is to enjoy oneself, at the expense of no matter whom."

Silence reforming.

Rísteárd Your illustrious teacher's single precept was to enjoy himself, at the expense of no matter whom.

Receptive "Destruction being one of the chief laws of Nature, nothing that destroys can be criminal."

Silence reforming.

Risteárd Destruction being one of the chief laws of your illustrious teacher, nothing that he destroyed did he look upon as being in any way criminal.

Receptive "I affirm that the fundamental, profoundest, and keenest penchant in man is incontestably to enchain his fellow creatures and to tyrannize them with all his might."

Silence reforming.

Risteárd Your illustrious teacher affirmed that the fundamental, profoundest, and keenest penchant in him was incontestably to enchain his fellow creatures and to tyrannize them with all his might.

Deep reflection translating.

Receptive (with tears) *Risteárd* I would never have known the great deception being set forth by the crafty vitiator I had taken to be my teacher had you not opened my eyes.

Fortunate, oh, most fortunate am I that up to now I have been only delighting myself in reading his words and

letting myself be intellectually liberated by them. I had not yet moved on to that inevitable stage where I would most definitely have tried to experiment with them myself firsthand.

Rísteárd but for your courage to reveal to me the truth, I would have embarked on a subtle campaign to corrupt and destroy the sacred sanctuaries of the innocent close at hand. I would in no time at all have become that person who I had cultured myself to call 'my illustrious teacher', and conceivably could have made him appear to be no more than a mere pathetic poseur of myself.

You have un-deSadefied my mind; rid it of all his repugnant cant ...

Rísteárd (smiling) It was not I, Receptive who revealed to you the truth but rather the silence of the golden hearth reforming.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling very happily) Rísteárd, I haven't felt this intellectually liberated in all my life.

Rísteárd (smiling happily) The truth has set you free Receptive
that you may again live your life in the fullness and dignity of
Nature; in the realm of True Nobility.

Silence embracing.

Quite spontaneously, Receptive feels the need to recite a beloved
poem from memory; a poem beginning with the words, "Hence vain deluding
joyes ..."

"Hence vain deluding joyes,
The brood of folly without father bred,
How little you bested,
Or fill the fixed mind with all your toyes;
Dwell in som idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the Sun Beams,
Or likest hovering dreams
The fickle Pensioners of Morpheus train.
But hail thou Goddes, sage and holy,
Hail divinest Melancholy,
Whose Saintly visage is too bright
To hit the Sense of human sight;
And therefore to our weaker view,
Ore laid with black staid Wisdoms hue.

Black, but such as in esteem,
Prince Memnons sister might beseem,
Or that Starr'd Ethiope Queen that strove
To set her beauties praise above
The Sea Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended,
Thee bright-hair'd Vesta long of yore,
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she (in Saturns raig,
Such mixture was not held a stain).
Oft in glimmering Bowres, and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
While yet there was no fear of Jove.
Com pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, stedfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestick train,
And sable stole of Cipres Lawn,
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Com, but keep thy wonted state,
With eev'n step, and musing gate,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There held in holy passion still,
Forget thy self to Marble, till
With a sad Leaden downward cast,

Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And joyn with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring,
Ay round about Joves Altar sing.
And adde to these retired leasure,
That in trim Gardens takes his pleasure;
But first, and chiefest, with thee bring,
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,
The Cherub Contemplation,
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will daign a Song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of night,
While Cynthia checks her Dragon yoke,
Gently o're th' accustom'd Oke;
Sweet Bird that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musicall, most melancholy!
Thee Chantress oft the Woods among,
I woo to hear thy eeven-Song;
And missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven Green,
To behold the wandring Moon,
Riding neer her highest noon,
Like one that had bin led astray
Through the Heavn's wide pathles way;

And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft on a Plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off Curfeu sound,
Over som wide-water'd shoar,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or if the Ayr will not permit,
Som still removed place will fit,
Where glowing Embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the Cricket on the hearth,
Or the Belmans drousie charm,
To bless the dores from nightly harm:
Or let my Lamp at midnight hour,
Be seen in som high lonely Towr,
Where I may oft out-watch the Bear,
With thrice greatHermes, or unsphear
The spirit of Plato to unfold
What Worlds, or what vast Regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook:
And of those Dæmons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or under ground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With Planet, or with Element.
Som time let Gorgeous Tragedy

In Scepter'd Pall com sweeping by,
Presenting Thebs, or Pelops line,
Or the tale of Troy divine.
Or what (though rare) of later age,
Ennobled hath the Buskind stage.
But, O sad Virgin, that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower,
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as warbled to the string,
Drew Iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what Love did seek.
Or call up him that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That own'd the vertuous Ring and Glass,
And of the wondrous Hors of Brass,
On which the Tartar King did ride;
And if ought els, great Bards beside,
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of Turneys and of Trophies hung;
Of Forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant then meets the ear.
Thus night oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appeer,
Not trickt and frounc't as she was wont,
With the Attick Boy to hunt,

But Cherches't in a comly Cloud,
While rocking Winds are Piping loud,
Or usher'd with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the russling Leaves,
With minute drops from off the Eaves.
And when the Sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me Goddes bring
To arched walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown that Sylvan loves
Of Pine, or monumental Oake,
Where the rude Ax with heaved stroke,
Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt.
There in close covert by som Brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from Day's garish eie,
While the Bee with Honied thie,
That at her flowry work doth sing,
And the Waters murmuring
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feather'd Sleep;
And let som strange mysterious dream,
Wave at his Wings in Airy stream,
Of lively portrature display'd,
Softly on my eye-lids laid.
And as I wake, sweet musick breath

Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by som spirit to mortals good,
Or th'unseen Genius of the Wood.
But let my due feet never fail,
To walk the studious Cloysters pale,
And love the high embowed Roof,
With antick Pillars massy proof,
And storied Windows richly dight,
Casting a dimm religious light.
There let the pealing Organ blow,
To the full voic'd Quire below,
In Service high, and Anthems cleer,
As may with sweetnes, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into extasies,
And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peacefull hermitage,
The Hairy Gown and Mossy Cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell,
Of every Star that Heav'n doth shew,
And every Herb that sips the dew;
Till old experience do attain
To somthing like Prophetic strain.
These pleasures Melancholy give,
And I with thee will choose to live."

Moments of reflective silence.

Rísteárd (with delightful humour) With so many gracious blessings finding is Receptive too now going to try and "out-watch the Bear" of this night?

Receptive (heartily laughing) Oh, what a wondrous night it has been, *Rísteárd*! I am going to bed surely the most contented human being on Beautiful Orb.

Rísteárd (smiling) The nights are many in number, and as many again in number are the stories needing to be told. If you are in no particular rush to leave the inn, then you are very welcome to sit yourself down there again tomorrow night, in that very same chair, where you may happily listen to whatever sighting the fire will bring to my eyes. And it would be my anticipation, Receptive that we would be following it with some very fine discourse as we did this night.

Receptive Thank you, *Rísteárd*. It's very good to be here.

Rísteárd You're most welcome, Receptive.
You go ahead now to your bed.
Take the candle from the table with you.
I will rake the fire.

Receptive Good night so, Risteárd, and thanks again.

Risteárd Have a sound sleep, Receptive.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Risteárd *Exeunt mightily serene*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Fleur-de-lys Pendulum*

Sunday Eve the 30th November 2002

Annotations:

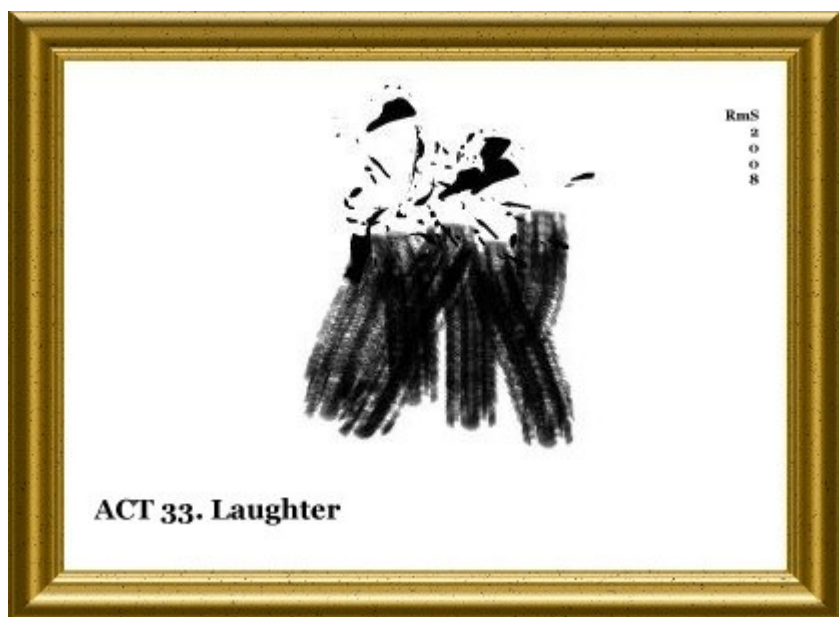
bóithrín - from Gaedhilge, meaning a 'lane' ; originally a cow path.

a chuisle mo croí - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'O beloved of my heart.'

Sile-ina-Giob - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'a woman/an old woman made to sit in a most undignified fashion as seen in old stone carvings in old walls'

poseur - a person who habitually pretends to be something he or she is not

Hence vain deluding joyes ... - Il *Penseroso* by John Milton (1608-1674)



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 33. *Laughter*

Prologue:

Risteárd is watching as the right wing of Earth is rising above the Sun of these winter days. Soft gentle tears are visiting his eyes. Sun's going out of view always makes him feel sorrowful, even when he was a very young child the view would make him feel sorrowful.

When he was a boy he would run and run along the ridges of the nearby hills with the hope of keeping Sun always in his eyes. To this day he cannot explain even to himself why he still feels so sorrowful at Sun's setting nor can he explain why he feels so wonderfully happy with Sun's rising.

He is remembering one particular evening after he had come in from having watched Sun setting, politely and prettily asking nine distinguished elderly guests who were sitting in the lobby of the inn chatting, how many universes does it take to turn one universe.

Quite taken aback by the question, they were very cleverly and jokingly about to answer him that it takes nine. However, before they had any chance to do so, he made himself spin around on tiptoe in their midst. All who were present were amazed at how bright he was and heartily laughed with each other. He was only five years old at the time. And he had laughed heartily with them too, yet for reasons only known to he himself.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Risteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him is his guest, Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Risteárd Ah, this pleasing fire, Receptive revives to my eyes the sighting of *Laughter*.

Receptive How does it proceed, Risteárd?

Risteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Rísteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?
I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Rísteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations
iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another
world)

A group of children playing on the ground.
Plenty of laughter.

'Right. 7 5 6 4 2 3 1. Your turn Mathtilae.'

A good man happened by, and when he saw the children
playing he asked,

'May I play with you? Your game sounds very interesting.'

'Sure. Big people can play this game too.'

'We're playing with numbers. It's so funny when we arrange them in different orders.'

'Watch carefully. Each person arranges the numbers in his or her own way. Then he asks another to read the numbers.'

'We've confined ourselves to seven numbers, but there is no limit to the number of numbers we could use. Isn't that right everybody?'

'Right as right be right.'

'And sometimes we use words instead of numbers. Words are more difficult to play with. Anyway, what really matters is the arrangements and the readings.'

'You show him how it works, Sumsi.'

Sumsi writes in the dust.

'Now you read them as I've arranged them. Begin here. Very slowly.'

'Okay. 6 1 2 3 4 5 7.'

Children rolling around the ground with laughter.

'I'll rearrange them. Now read.'

'Okay. 6 4 7 3 5 2 1.'

Again the children are falling around the place with laughter.

'One more time. Read.'

'4 1 2'

'Stop, stop, please before our sides cave in.'

'Great fun isn't it? Would you like to play some more?'

'Thank you, but I've got to catch a plane. Thanks for letting me participate in your very interesting game. Bye all.'

'You're welcome.'

'Bye bye, Mr Sir.'

'Sumsi, you being a brain above the rest of us, can you tell us how is it possible to catch a plane?'

'Well now. You see it's like this. You have to run very fast after it, just like running after a pigbird in the park, and then you make one mighty big jump and grab on to its tail of an end.'

'No wonder you've the brains, Sumsi.'

'Astounding pot of knowledge.'

'Astounding.'

'My grandfather was a chamberpotter. It runs in the family.'

'Whose turn is it?'

'It's mine.'

'What runs in the family, Sumsi?'

'Ball bearings! Silver ball bearings!'

The good man boards an airplane.

'You may take a seat anywhere Sir, as we don't have many travelling with us on this flight.'

'Thank you. I'd like to sit by a window.'

'Right this way Sir.'

'Thank you.'

'Would you like something to read?'

'No, thank you. I enjoy looking out the window during a flight.'

'Enjoy the sights.'

White~clouds~below~softblue~sky~above.

Musing to himself.

" ... what really matters is the arrangements and the readings."

We can say 1 comes after 0 or 3 comes after 2 or 2 comes after 3. However, we could write 1 5 0 7 4 2 6 8 3 9. This would then give us a different reading.

Thought leap.

Can there be such a thing as a standard time continuum or even for that matter is there really in fact such a thing as time outside of numbers?

Having 1 come after 0 or 2 come before 3 is merely a particular agreed upon arrangement. Once we get used to that arrangement it becomes the standard. To say 0 1 6 2 7 8 3 4 9 5 is no different from saying 1 9 0 8 4 6 3 5 2 7, 7 8 4 6 1 3 9 5 2 0 or 5 7 0 9 6 3 2 8 1 4.

The greater the number of numbers the more arrangements are possible. That being the case, numbers in themselves are nothing special, but rather it is their arrangement.

Thought leap.

Numbers are words. Therefore this would also be true in the case of names of the days of the week, months of the year and the seasons. All the time words we use. Then it's the arrangement of the words not the actual meaning of the words themselves within this context that becomes important.

Silverlined~clouds~below~moonstarry~sky~above.

When we talk about clock-time we express it as 2:30, and now again as 2:35, and again as 2:58 and so on. However,

we could just as well say 2:35, 2:33, 2:42, 2:56, 2:31 and so on and so on. It's definitely possible that one could program a computer to show these readings. In fact we could program it in such a way that it would show numerous readings in as many different arrangements as one would wish. Our calendars could also be designed in such a way as to show a month having sixteen days and have July follow October.

So what does that tell me about what we refer to as the time continuum? It tells me that most definitely the time continuum does exist, but only within number-words. In no way does it exist independent of these number-words. It exists merely in their arrangements, whatever the particular arrangement may be.

Golden~golden~golden~every~where.

If we speak of a time continuum which extends from 2,000 years ago, then that time continuum only exists in all the numbers themselves from 2,000 and in the words, years ago.

Time only has an existence because number-words exist. Outside of these number-time-words there can be no such thing as a time continuum. That which we call Time exists only because it has a place to exist, namely, in the number-words we have fashioned.

And, that is WHERE we probably slipped up.

We have allowed ourselves to be deluded into being firmly convinced that there is really such a thing as Time which we can measure and describe accurately with our number-words. In other words, that Time is understood and accepted as existing on its own external to them.

Perhaps all events take place and exist in WHERE.

If that should be the case then ...

'Ladies and gentlemen this is your Captain. Our time of arrival will be exactly 8:43:59 local time. Temperature on the ground is a comfortable 25.0000028 degrees Celsius. We hope you had a pleasant flight. Do fly with us again sometime.'

Smiling becomes laughter.

Musing.

They were right when they said what really matters is the arrangements and the readings. Theirs is the logic most pure; logic most venerable.

Stewardess pleasantly.

'What's so funny Mr Forthetimebeinit?'

'Oh, I was just musing. That's all.'

As he is leaving the airplane the same stewardess says goodbye to him.

'Nice to have had you on board, Mr Forthetimebeinit. We hope you had a nice flight.'

'Thank you. I had a wonderful mindflight.'

'Captain, that passenger who has just left there, well, well when he first came on board he looked very down in himself as if he had a lot on his mind. However, for the last half hour or so of the flight he has been smiling and laughing away to himself.'

'It's all a matter of timing, Miss Nutune. Fly with the right computers, the right kind of people, and all your worries will disappear. We depart on time and we arrive on time. This is the key to making our passengers comfortable. You could say in our own small way we are helping to make the world; the great Timel Village a more comfortable place for everybody.'

One with time and the world is one. In fact the whole Universe is in time with us. This is important people to keep in mind all of the time. We serve Lord Time best by being on time for Him all of the time. Right, people?'

'Alwaysandalways, Captain.'

'Timel Village? It makes a change from calling it
Glueable Village.'

'It's Global Village, Miss Funtune. Have a nice weekend
all of you and I'll see you on Monday at exactly 0500 hours'.

'You too, Captain Exactovawl.'

'Sometimes he gets on my nerves.'

'Ah, he was probably reared by a very exacting
computer.'

'Maybe he is a computer!'

'You never miss a chance. Listen, we've got two of His
days to tour the sights.'

'His? I'm an atimeist'.

'Heryousee!

Heryousee, shouted the mighty Computerarch
Exactovawl. Fireher and higher another her her ...'

Laughter rolls upon laughter.

'Stop, stop before I'll ruin my mascara.'

'I picked up a new word from that passenger, Mr
Forthetimebeinit as he was leaving.'

'His name?'

'No, "mindflight". He said he had had a wonderful
'mindflight'. Interesting word, isn't it?'

'Mind is interesting. Well now, flight? That's another ...'

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Laughter* ~
a sighting of the sacred hearth.

Receptive (smiling) I was with much laughter, Risteárd
throughout this marvellous sighting of human improvement.

Risteárd of all the fine poems you've memorized that are
written in English which one in particular do you like to muse
upon from time to time?

Risteárd (smiling broadly) Oh, I greatly enjoy musing upon
Walter De La Mare's *The Listeners*.

~ The Listeners ~

Is there anybody there?' said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champ'd the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor:
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller's head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
'Is there anybody there?' he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Lean'd over and look'd into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplex'd and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners

That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Harkening in an air stirr'd and shaken
By the lonely Traveller's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starr'd and leafy sky:
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head:
'Tell them I came, and no one answer'd,
That I kept my word,' he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) How about Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) I like to muse from time to time, *Risteárd*
on Dylan Thomas' *Fern Hill*.

~ Fern Hill ~

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was
green,
The night above the dingle starry,
Time let me hail and climb
Golden in the heydays of his eyes,
And honoured among the wagons I was prince of the
apple towns
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves
Trail with daisies and barely
Down the rivers of the windfall night.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the
barns
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was
home,
In the sun that is young once only,
Time let me play and be
Golden in the mercy of his means,
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman,
the calves

Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,
And the Sabbath rang slowly
In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay-
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys,
it was air
And playing, lovely and watery
And fire green as grass
And nightly under the simple stars
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the
nightjars
Flying with the ricks, and the horses
Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white
With the dew, come back, the weathercock on his
shoulder: it was all
Shining, it was Adam and maiden,
The sky gathered again
And the sun grew round that very day.
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses
walking warm
Out of the whinnying green stable

On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay
house
Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was
long,
In the sun born over and over,
I ran my heedless ways,
My wishes raced through the house high hay
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time
allows
In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning
songs
Before the children green and golden
Follow him out of grace.

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would
take me
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my
hand,
In the moon that is always rising,
Nor that riding to sleep
I should hear him fly with the high fields
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless
land.
Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,
Time held me green and dying

Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) With such precious images and senses,
Receptive what would you say to a nice hot cup of tea with
some freshly baked cake, butter and blackberry & apple jam?

Receptive (smiling) I would say, *Risteárd* that's a wonderful
suggestion.

Aoife joins them for the tea. And Receptive for some unknown reason
has taken to telling ghost stories which are bringing an abundance of
laughter from Aoife and *Risteárd*.

After the tea.

Receptive (smiling) How does mathematics work, *Risteárd*
considering that it originates in the mind rather than in the
empirical world?

And on the same wavelength, why does logic work even
though it too is a thing of the mind rather than of pragmatics?

Risteárd (smiling) Blessed is the one, Receptive who ...

Rísteárd has stopped in his reply for he is noticing that a family friend from the world invisible is appearing into the room via the window wall.

Receptive is experiencing childlike wonderment at the sight.

Rísteárd is bringing up a chair, and is inviting his friend with introducing him to Receptive to come sit down with them here in front of the fire.

Charles (smiling) Rísteárd I heard you telling the wonderful sighting of the little children playing on the ground with numbers, and the big children playing in the air with words. Their laughter and wisdom filled me with great joy. And to add to my pleasure, your ghost stories, Receptive were charming.

Rísteárd (smiling) Charles, what story in kind and style; what story of laughter and wisdom do you bring for us here on this lovely midwinter night about the hearth?

Charles (happily) I will endeavour so, Rísteárd to tell before this cosy hearth, a story of laughter and wisdom on the rekindling of harmonious relationships between Emotions, Logics, and Mathematics; a story from which we may embark upon a journey of exploring its hidden meanings for the Yester, the Morrow, and the Beyond, and which will but enhance Significance to the wonderful sighting *Laughter*, and to the teatime ghost stories in whose company no doubt it will be finding itself a most pleasant wanderer.

Risteárd (smiling) Delightful, Charles. How does it proceed,?

Charles (smiling) It proceeds, Risteárd and Receptive from the following astounding words of the world visible.

Mathematics was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. **Logics** signed it. And **Logics'** name was good upon Exchange Street, for anything he chose to put his hand to. **Old Mathematics** was as dead as a door-nail.

Mind! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail. I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country's done for. You will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically, that **Mathematics** was as dead as a door-nail. **Logics** knew he was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? **Logics** and he were partners for I don't know how many years. **Logics** was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee, his sole friend, and sole mourner. And even **Logics** was not so dreadfully cut up by the sad event, but that he was an excellent man of business on the very day of the funeral, and solemnised it with an undoubted bargain.

The mention of **Mathematics'** funeral brings me back to the point I started from. There is no doubt that **Mathematics** was dead. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of

the story I am going to relate. If we were not perfectly convinced that Hamlet's Father died before the play began, there would be nothing more remarkable in his taking a stroll at night, in an easterly wind, upon his own ramparts, than there would be in any other middle-aged gentleman rashly turning out after dark in a breezy spot - say Saint Paul's Churchyard for instance - literally to astonish his son's weak mind.

Logics never painted out **Old Mathematics'** name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the ware-house door: **Logics** and **Mathematics**. The firm was known as **Logics & Mathematics**. Sometimes people new to the business called **Logics Logics**, and sometimes **Mathematics**, but he answered to both names. It was all the same to him.

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, **Logics!** a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas. External heat and cold had little influence on **Logics**. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could

boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often came down handsomely, and **Logics** never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, "My dear **Logics**, how are you. When will you come to see me." No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of **Logics**. Even the blindmen's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, "No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master! "

But what did **Logics** care! It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call nuts to **Logics**.

Once upon a time - of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve, old **Logics** sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal: and he could hear the people in the court outside, go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already: it had not been light all day: and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighbouring offices, like ruddy smears upon the palpable brown air. The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without, that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come drooping down, obscuring

everything, one might have thought that Nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale.

The door of **Logics'** counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. **Logics** had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't replenish it, for **Logics** kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.

"A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of **Logics'** nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach. "Bah!" said **Logics**, "Humbug!"

He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of **Logics'**, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again.

"Christmas a humbug, uncle!" said **Logics'** nephew. "You don't mean that, I am sure."

"I do," said **Logics**. "Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? what reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough." "Come, then," returned the nephew gaily. "What right have you to be

dismal? what reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough."

Logics having no better answer ready on the spur of the moment, said, "Bah!" again; and followed it up with "Humbug."

"Don't be cross, uncle," said the nephew.

"What else can I be," returned the uncle, "when I live in such a world of fools as this Merry Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas. What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in 'em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will," said **Logics** indignantly, "every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!"

"Uncle!" pleaded the nephew.

"Nephew!" returned the uncle, sternly, "keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine."

"Keep it!" repeated **Logics'** nephew. "But you don't keep it."

"Let me leave it alone, then," said **Logics**. "Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!"

"There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say," returned the nephew:

"Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round - apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that - as a good time: a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really

were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!" The clerk in the tank involuntarily applauded. Becoming immediately sensible of the impropriety, he poked the fire, and extinguished the last frail spark for ever.

"Let me hear another sound from you," said **Logics**, " and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation. You're quite a powerful speaker, sir," he added, turning to his nephew. "I wonder you don't go into Parliament."

"Don't be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us to-morrow."

Logics said that he would see him - yes, indeed he did. He went the whole length of the expression, and said that he would see him in that extremity first.

"But why?" cried **Logics'** nephew. "Why?"

"Why did you get married?" said **Logics**.

"Because I fell in love."

"Because you fell in love!" growled **Logics**, as if that were the only one thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas. "Good afternoon!"

"Nay, uncle, but you never came to see me before that happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?"

"Good afternoon," said **Logics**.

"I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why cannot we be friends?"

"Good afternoon," said **Logics**.

"I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never

had any quarrel, to which I have been a party. But I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas humour to the last. So A Merry Christmas, uncle!"

"Good afternoon!" said **Logics**.

"And A Happy New Year!"

"Good afternoon!" said **Logics**.

His nephew left the room without an angry word, notwithstanding. He stopped at the outer door to bestow the greeting of the season on the clerk, who, cold as he was, was warmer than **Logics**; for he returned them cordially.

"There's another fellow," muttered **Logics**; who overheard him: "my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam."

This lunatic, in letting **Logics**' nephew out, had let two other people in. They were portly gentlemen, pleasant to behold, and now stood, with their hats off, in **Logics**' office. They had books and papers in their hands, and bowed to him.

"**Logics** and **Mathematics**", I believe," said one of the gentlemen, referring to his list. "Have I the pleasure of addressing **Mr. Logics**, or **Mr. Mathematics**?"

"**Mr. Mathematics** has been dead these seven years," **Logics** replied.

"He died seven years ago, this very night."

"We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner," said the gentleman, presenting his credentials.

It certainly was; for they had been two kindred spirits. At the ominous word "liberality", **Logics** frowned, and shook his head, and

handed the credentials back.

"At this festive season of the year, **Mr. Logics**," said the gentleman, taking up a pen, "it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir."

"Are there no prisons?" asked **Logics**.

"Plenty of prisons," said the gentleman, laying down the pen again.

"And the Union workhouses?" demanded **Logics**. "Are they still in operation?"

"They are. Still," returned the gentleman, "I wish I could say they were not."

"The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?" said **Logics**.

"Both very busy, sir."

"Oh! I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course," said **Logics**. "I'm very glad to hear it."

"Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude," returned the gentleman, "a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?"

"Nothing!" **Logics** replied.

"You wish to be anonymous?"

"I wish to be left alone," said **Logics**. "Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to

support the establishments, I have mentioned: they cost enough: and those who are badly off must go there."

"Many can't go there; and many would rather die."

"If they would rather die," said **Logics**, "they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides - excuse me - I don't know that."

"But you might know it," observed the gentleman.

"It's not my business," **Logics** returned. "It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!" Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the gentlemen withdrew. **Logics** resumed his labours with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more facetious temper than was usual with him.

Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened so, that people ran about with flaring links, proffering their services to go before horses in carriages, and conduct them on their way. The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell was always peeping slyly down at **Logics** out of a gothic window in the wall, became invisible, and struck the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there. The cold became intense. In the main street, at the corner of the court, some labourers were repairing the gas-pipes, and had lighted a great fire in a brazier, round which a party of ragged men and boys were gathered: warming their hands and winking their eyes before the blaze in rapture. The water-plug being left in solitude, its overflowings sullenly congealed, and turned to misanthropic ice. The brightness of the shops where holly sprigs and berries crackled in the lamp-heat of the windows, made pale faces ruddy as they passed.

Poulterers' and grocers' trades became a splendid joke: a glorious pageant, with which it was next to impossible to believe that such dull principles as bargain and sale had anything to do. The Lord Mayor, in the stronghold of the might Mansion House, gave orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to keep Christmas as a Lord Mayor's household should; and even the little tailor, whom he had fined five shillings on the previous Monday for being drunk and bloodthirsty in the streets, stirred up tomorrow's pudding in his garret, while his lean wife and the baby sallied out to buy the beef.

Foggier yet, and colder! Piercing, searching, biting cold. If the good Saint Dunstan had but nipped the Evil Spirit's nose with a touch of such weather as that, instead of using his familiar weapons, then indeed he would have roared to lusty purpose. The owner of one scant young nose, gnawed and mumbled by the hungry cold as bones are gnawed by dogs, stooped down at **Logics'** keyhole to regale him with a Christmas carol: but at the first sound of, "God bless you, merry gentleman! May nothing you dismay!"

Logics seized the ruler with such energy of action that the singer fled in terror, leaving the keyhole to the fog and even more congenial frost.

At length the hour of shutting up the counting-house arrived. With an ill-will **Logics** dismounted from his stool, and tacitly admitted the fact to the expectant clerk in the Tank, who instantly snuffed his candle out, and put on his hat. "You'll want all day tomorrow, I suppose?" said **Logics**. "If quite convenient, Sir."

"It's not convenient," said **Logics**, "and it's not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown for it, you'd think yourself ill-used, I'll be bound?"

The clerk smiled faintly.

"And yet," said **Logics**, "you don't think me ill-used, when I pay a day's wages for no work."

The clerk observed that it was only once a year.

"A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December!" said **Logics**, buttoning his great-coat to the chin. "But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning!"

The clerk promised that he would; and **Logics** walked out with a growl. The office was closed in a twinkling, and the clerk, with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist (for he boasted no great-coat), went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a lane of boys, twenty times, in honour of its being Christmas Eve, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could pelt, to play at blindman's buff.

Logics took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker's-book, went home to bed. He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner. They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering pile of building up a yard, where it had so little business to be, that one could scarcely help fancying it must have run there when it was a young house, playing at hide-and-seek with other houses, and have forgotten the way out again. It was old enough now, and dreary enough, for nobody lived in it but **Logics**, the other rooms being all let out as offices. The yard was so dark that even **Logics**, who knew its every stone, was fain to

grobe with his hands. The fog and frost so hung about the black old gateway of the house, that it seemed as if the Genius of the Weather sat in mournful meditation on the threshold.

Now, it is a fact, that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very large. It is also a fact, that **Logics** had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place; also that **Logics** had as little of what is called fancy about him as any man in the City of London, even including - which is a bold word - the corporation, aldermen, and livery. Let it also be borne in mind that **Logics** had not bestowed one thought on **Mathematics**, since his last mention of his seven-year's dead partner that afternoon. And then let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that **Logics**, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change: not a knocker, but **Mathematics'** face.

Mathematics' face. It was not in impenetrable shadow as the other objects in the yard were, but had a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar. It was not angry or ferocious, but looked at **Logics** as **Mathematics** used to look: with ghostly spectacles turned up upon its ghostly forehead. The hair was curiously stirred, as if by breath or hot-air; and, though the eyes were wide open, they were perfectly motionless. That, and its livid colour, made it horrible; but its horror seemed to be in spite of the face and beyond its control, rather than a part of its own expression.

As **Logics** looked fixedly at this phenomenon, it was a knocker again. To say that he was not startled, or that his blood was not conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had been a stranger from

infancy, would be untrue. But he put his hand upon the key he had relinquished, turned it sturdily, walked in, and lighted his candle. He did pause, with a moment's irresolution, before he shut the door; and he did look cautiously behind it first, as if he half expected to be terrified with the sight of **Mathematics'** pigtail sticking out into the hall. But there was nothing on the back of the door, except the screws and nuts that held the knocker on, so he said "Pooh, pooh!" and closed it with a bang.

The sound resounded through the house like thunder. Every room above, and every cask in the wine-merchant's cellars below, appeared to have a separate peal of echoes of its own. **Logics** was not a man to be frightened by echoes. He fastened the door, and walked across the hall, and up the stairs, slowly too: trimming his candle as he went.

You may talk vaguely about driving a coach-and-six up a good old flight of stairs, or through a bad young Act of Parliament; but I mean to say you might have got a hearse up that staircase, and taken it broadwise, with the splinter-bar towards the wall and the door towards the balustrades: and done it easy. There was plenty of width for that, and room to spare; which is perhaps the reason why **Logics** thought he saw a locomotive hearse going on before him in the gloom. Half-a-dozen gas-lamps out of the street wouldn't have lighted the entry too well, so you may suppose that it was pretty dark with **Logics'** dip.

Up **Logics** went, not caring a button for that: darkness is cheap, and **Logics** liked it. But before he shut his heavy door, he

walked through his rooms to see that all was right. He had just enough recollection of the face to desire to do that.

Sitting-room, bed-room, lumber-room. All as they should be. Nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa; a small fire in the grate; spoon and basin ready; and the little saucepan of gruel (**Logics** has a cold in his head) upon the hob. Nobody under the bed; nobody in the closet; nobody in his dressing-gown, which was hanging up in a suspicious attitude against the wall. Lumber-room as usual. Old fire-guard, old shoes, two fish-baskets, washing-stand on three legs, and a poker.

Quite satisfied, he closed his door, and locked himself in; double-locked himself in, which was not his custom. Thus secured against surprise, he took off his cravat; put on his dressing-gown and slippers, and his night-cap; and sat down before the fire to take his gruel.

It was a very low fire indeed; nothing on such a bitter night. He was obliged to sit close to it, and brood over it, before he could extract the least sensation of warmth from such a handful of fuel. The fireplace was an old one, built by some Dutch merchant long ago, and paved all round with quaint Dutch tiles, designed to illustrate the Scriptures. There were Cains and Abels, Pharaoh's daughters, Queens of Sheba, Angelic messengers descending through the air on clouds like feather-beds, Abrahams, Belshazzars, Apostles putting off to sea in butter-boats, hundreds of figures to attract his thoughts; and yet that face of **Mathematics**, seven years dead, came like the ancient Prophet's rod, and swallowed up the whole. If each smooth tile had been a blank at first, with power to shape some picture on its

surface from the disjointed fragments of his thoughts, there would have been a copy of old **Mathematics'** head on every one.

"Humbug!" said **Logics**; and walked across the room.

After several turns, he sat down again. As he threw his head back in the chair, his glance happened to rest upon a bell, a disused bell, that hung in the room, and communicated for some purpose now forgotten with a chamber in the highest story of the building. It was with great astonishment, and with a strange, inexplicable dread, that as he looked, he saw this bell begin to swing. It swung so softly in the outset that it scarcely made a sound; but soon it rang out loudly, and so did every bell in the house.

This might have lasted half a minute, or a minute, but it seemed an hour. The bells ceased as they had begun, together. They were succeeded by a clanking noise, deep down below; as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the casks in the wine-merchant's cellar. **Logics** then remembered to have heard that ghosts in haunted houses were described as dragging chains.

The cellar-door flew open with a booming sound, and then he heard the noise much louder, on the floors below; then coming up the stairs; then coming straight towards his door.

"It's humbug still!" said **Logics**. "I won't believe it."

His colour changed though, when, without a pause, it came on through the heavy door, and passed into the room before his eyes. Upon its coming in, the dying flame leaped up, as though it cried, "I know him! **Mathematics' Ghost!**" and fell again.

The same face: the very same. **Mathematics** in his pigtail, usual waistcoat, tights, and boots; the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pigtail, and his coat-skirts, and the hair upon his head. The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made (for **Logics** observed it closely) of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel. His body was transparent; so that **Logics**, observing him, and looking through his waistcoat, could see the two buttons on his coat behind.

Logics had often heard it said that **Mathematics** had no bowels, but he had never believed it until now. No, nor did he believe it even now. Though he looked the phantom through and through, and saw it standing before him; though he felt the chilling influence of its death-cold eyes; and marked the very texture of the folded kerchief bound about its head and chin, which wrapper he had not observed before; he was still incredulous, and fought against his senses.

"How now!" said **Logics**, caustic and cold as ever. "What do you want with me?"

"Much!" - **Mathematics'** voice, no doubt about it.

"Who are you?"

"Ask me who I was."

"Who were you then." said **Logics**, raising his voice. "You're particular, for a shade." He was going to say "to a shade," but substituted this, as more appropriate.

"In life I was your partner, **Mathematics**."

"Can you - can you sit down?" asked **Logics**, looking doubtfully at him.

"I can."

"Do it, then."

Logics asked the question, because he didn't know whether a ghost so transparent might find himself in a condition to take a chair; and felt that in the event of its being impossible, it might involve the necessity of an embarrassing explanation. But the ghost sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, as if he were quite used to it.

"You don't believe in me," observed the **Ghost**.

"I don't," said **Logics**.

"What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your senses?"

"I don't know," said **Logics**.

"Why do you doubt your senses?"

"Because," said **Logics**, "a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!"

Logics was not much in the habit of cracking jokes, nor did he feel, in his heart, by any means waggish then. The truth is, that he tried to be smart, as a means of distracting his own attention, and keeping down his terror; for the spectre's voice disturbed the very marrow in his bones.

To sit, staring at those fixed, glazed eyes, in silence for a moment, would play, **Logics** felt, the very deuce with him. There was something very awful, too, in the spectre's being provided with an infernal atmosphere of its own. **Logics** could not feel it himself, but

this was clearly the case; for though the **Ghost** sat perfectly motionless, its hair, and skirts, and tassels, were still agitated as by the hot vapour from an oven.

"You see this toothpick?" said **Logics**, returning quickly to the charge, for the reason just assigned; and wishing, though it were only for a second, to divert the vision's stony gaze from himself.

"I do," replied the **Ghost**.

"You are not looking at it," said **Logics**.

"But I see it," said the **Ghost**, "notwithstanding."

"Well!" returned **Logics**, "I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. Humbug, I tell you; humbug!"

At this the spirit raised a frightful cry, and shook its chain with such a dismal and appalling noise, that **Logics** held on tight to his chair, to save himself from falling in a swoon. But how much greater was his horror, when the phantom taking off the bandage round its head, as if it were too warm to wear in-doors, its lower jaw dropped down upon its breast!

Logics fell upon his knees, and clasped his hands before his face.

"Mercy!" he said. "Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?"

"Man of the worldly mind!" replied the **Ghost**, "do you believe in me or not?"

"I do," said **Logics**. "I must. But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?"

"It is required of every man," the **Ghost** returned, "that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world - oh, woe

is me! - and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!"

Again the spectre raised a cry, and shook its chain, and wrung its shadowy hands.

"You are fettered," said **Logics**, trembling. "Tell me why?"

"I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the **Ghost**. "I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?"

Logics trembled more and more.

"Or would you know," pursued the **Ghost**, "the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!"

Logics glanced about him on the floor, in the expectation of finding himself surrounded by some fifty or sixty fathoms of iron cable: but he could see nothing.

"**Mathematics**," he said, imploringly. "**Old Mathematics**, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, **Mathematics**."

"I have none to give," the **Ghost** replied. "It comes from other regions, **Logics**, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. Nor can I tell you what I would. A very little more, is all permitted to me. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house - mark me! - in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me!"

It was a habit with **Logics**, whenever he became thoughtful, to put his hands in his breeches pockets. Pondering on what the **Ghost**

had said, he did so now, but without lifting up his eyes, or getting off his knees.

"You must have been very slow about it, **Mathematics**," **Logics** observed, in a business-like manner, though with humility and deference.

"Slow!" the **Ghost** repeated.

"Seven years dead," mused **Logics**. "And travelling all the time?"

"The whole time," said the **Ghost**. "No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse."

"You travel fast?" said **Logics**.

"On the wings of the wind," replied the **Ghost**.

"You might have got over a great quantity of ground in seven years," said **Logics**.

The **Ghost**, on hearing this, set up another cry, and clanked its chain so hideously in the dead silence of the night, that the Ward would have been justified in indicting it for a nuisance.

"Oh! captive, bound, and double-ironed," cried the phantom, "not to know, that ages of incessant labour by immortal creatures, for this earth must pass into eternity before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed. Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunities misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!"

"But you were always a good man of business, **Mathematics**," faltered **Logics**, who now began to apply this to himself.

"Business!" cried the **Ghost**, wringing its hands again. "Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my

business!"

It held up its chain at arm's length, as if that were the cause of all its unavailing grief, and flung it heavily upon the ground again.

"At this time of the rolling year," the spectre said, "I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode? Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me!"

Logics was very much dismayed to hear the spectre going on at this rate, and began to quake exceedingly.

"Hear me!" cried the **Ghost**. "My time is nearly gone."

"I will," said **Logics**. "But don't be hard upon me! Don't be flowery,

Mathematics! Pray!"

"How it is that I appear before you in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day."

It was not an agreeable idea. **Logics** shivered, and wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"That is no light part of my penance," pursued the **Ghost**. "I am here to-night to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, **Logics**."

"You were always a good friend to me," said **Logics**. "Thank'ee!"

"You will be haunted," resumed the **Ghost**, "by Three Spirits."

Logics' countenance fell almost as low as the **Ghost's** had done.

"Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, **Mathematics?**" he demanded, in a faltering voice.

"It is."

"I - I think I'd rather not," said **Logics**.

"Without their visits," said the **Ghost**, "you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first to-morrow, when the bell tolls One."

"Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and have it over, **Mathematics?**"

hinted **Logics**.

"Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us."

When it had said these words, the spectre took its wrapper from the table, and bound it round its head, as before. **Logics** knew this, by the smart sound its teeth made, when the jaws were brought together by the bandage. He ventured to raise his eyes again, and found his supernatural visitor confronting him in an erect attitude, with its chain wound over and about its arm.

The apparition walked backward from him; and at every step it took, the window raised itself a little, so that when the spectre reached it, it was wide open.

It beckoned **Logics** to approach, which he did. When they were within two paces of each other, **Mathematics' Ghost** held up its hand, warning him to come no nearer. **Logics** stopped.

Not so much in obedience, as in surprise and fear: for on the raising of the hand, he became sensible of confused noises in the air; incoherent sounds of lamentation and regret; wailings inexpressibly sorrowful and self-accusatory. The spectre, after listening for a moment, joined in the mournful dirge; and floated out upon the bleak, dark night. **Logics** followed to the window: desperate in his curiosity. He looked out.

The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like **Mathematics' Ghost**; some few (they might be

guilty governments) were linked together; none were free. Many had been personally known to **Logics** in their lives. He had been quite familiar with one old ghost, in a white waistcoat, with a monstrous iron safe attached to its ankle, who cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom it saw below, upon a door-step. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever.

Whether these creatures faded into mist, or mist enshrouded them, he could not tell. But they and their spirit voices faded together; and the night became as it had been when he walked home. **Logics** closed the window, and examined the door by which the **Ghost** had entered. It was double-locked, as he had locked it with his own hands, and the bolts were undisturbed. He tried to say "Humbug!" but stopped at the first syllable. And being, from the emotion he had undergone, or the fatigues of the day, or his glimpse of the Invisible World, or the dull conversation of the **Ghost**, or the lateness of the hour, much in need of repose; went straight to bed, without undressing, and fell asleep upon the instant.

When **Logics** awoke, it was so dark, that looking out of bed, he could scarcely distinguish the transparent window from the opaque walls of his chamber. He was endeavouring to pierce the darkness with his ferret eyes, when the chimes of a neighbouring church struck the four quarters. So he listened for the hour. To his great astonishment the heavy bell went on from six to seven, and from seven to eight, and regularly up to twelve; then stopped. Twelve! It was past two when he went to bed. The clock was wrong. An icicle must have got into the works. Twelve!

He touched the spring of his repeater, to correct this most preposterous clock. Its rapid little pulse beat twelve: and stopped. "Why, it isn't possible," said **Logics**, "that I can have slept through a whole day and far into another night. It isn't possible that anything has happened to the sun, and this is twelve at noon!"

The idea being an alarming one, he scrambled out of bed, and groped his way to the window. He was obliged to rub the frost off with the sleeve of his dressing-gown before he could see anything; and could see very little then. All he could make out was, that it was still very foggy and extremely cold, and that there was no noise of people running to and fro, and making a great stir, as there unquestionably would have been if night had beaten off bright day, and taken possession of the world. This was a great relief, because "three days after sight of this First of Exchange pay to **Mr. Logics** or his order," and so forth, would have become a mere United States' security if there were no days to count by.

Logics went to bed again, and thought, and thought, and thought it over and over, and could make nothing of it. The more he thought, the more perplexed he was; and the more he endeavoured not to think, the more he thought **Mathematics' Ghost** bothered him exceedingly. Every time he resolved within himself, after mature inquiry, that it was all a dream, his mind flew back, like a strong spring released, to its first position, and presented the same problem to be worked all through, "Was it a dream or not?"

Logics lay in this state until the chime had gone three quarters more, when he remembered, on a sudden, that the **Ghost** had warned him of a visitation when the bell tolled one. He resolved

to lie awake until the hour was past; and, considering that he could no more go to sleep than go to Heaven, this was perhaps the wisest resolution in his power.

The quarter was so long, that he was more than once convinced he must have sunk into a doze unconsciously, and missed the clock. At length it broke upon his listening ear.

"Ding, dong!"

"A quarter past," said **Logics**, counting.

"Ding, dong!"

"Half past!" said **Logics**.

"Ding, dong!"

"A quarter to it," said **Logics**.

"Ding, dong!"

"The hour itself," said **Logics**, triumphantly, "and nothing else!"

He spoke before the hour bell sounded, which it now did with a deep, dull, hollow, melancholy ONE. Light flashed up in the room upon the instant, and the curtains of his bed were drawn.

The curtains of his bed were drawn aside, I tell you, by a hand. Not the curtains at his feet, nor the curtains at his back, but those to which his face was addressed. The curtains of his bed were drawn aside; and **Logics**, starting up into a half-recumbent attitude, found himself face to face with the unearthly visitor who drew them: as close to it as I am now to you, and I am standing in the spirit at your elbow.

It was a strange figure - like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being

diminished to a child's proportions. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, was white as if with age; and yet the face had not a wrinkle in it, and the tenderest bloom was on the skin. The arms were very long and muscular; the hands the same, as if its hold were of uncommon strength. Its legs and feet, most delicately formed, were, like those upper members, bare. It wore a tunic of the purest white and round its waist was bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which was beautiful. It held a branch of fresh green holly in its hand; and, in singular contradiction of that wintry emblem, had its dress trimmed with summer flowers. But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguisher for a cap, which it now held under its arm.

Even this, though, when **Logics** looked at it with increasing steadiness, was not its strangest quality. For as its belt sparkled and glittered now in one part and now in another, and what was light one instant, at another time was dark, so the figure itself fluctuated in its distinctness: being now a thing with one arm, now with one leg, now with twenty legs, now a pair of legs without a head, now a head without a body: of which dissolving parts, no outline would be visible in the dense gloom wherein they melted away. And in the very wonder of this, it would be itself again; distinct and clear as ever. "Are you the Spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold to me?" asked **Logics**.

"I am!"

The voice was soft and gentle. Singularly low, as if instead of being so close beside him, it were at a distance.

"Who, and what are you?" **Logics** demanded.

"I am the **Ghost of Emotions Past**."

"Long past?" inquired **Logics**: observant of its dwarfish stature.

"No. Your past."

Perhaps, **Logics** could not have told anybody why, if anybody could have asked him; but he had a special desire to see the Spirit in his cap; and begged him to be covered.

"What!" exclaimed the Ghost, "would you so soon put out, with worldly hands, the light I give? Is it not enough that you are one of those whose passions made this cap, and force me through whole trains of years to wear it low upon my brow!"

Logics reverently disclaimed all intention to offend or any knowledge of having wilfully bonneted the Spirit at any period of his life. He then made bold to inquire what business brought him there.

"Your welfare!" said the Ghost.

Logics expressed himself much obliged, but could not help thinking that a night of unbroken rest would have been more conducive to that end. The Spirit must have heard him thinking, for it said immediately:

"Your reclamation, then. Take heed!"

It put out its strong hand as it spoke, and clasped him gently by the arm.

"Rise! and walk with me!"

It would have been in vain for **Logics** to plead that the weather and the hour were not adapted to pedestrian purposes; that bed was warm, and the thermometer a long way below freezing; that he was clad but lightly in his slippers, dressing-gown, and nightcap; and that he had a cold upon him at that time. The grasp, though gentle as a woman's hand, was not to be resisted. He rose: but finding that the Spirit made towards the window, clasped his robe in supplication.

"I am mortal," **Logics** remonstrated, "and liable to fall."

"Bear but a touch of my hand there," said the Spirit, laying it upon his heart, "and you shall be upheld in more than this!"

As the words were spoken, they passed through the wall, and stood upon an open country road, with fields on either hand. The city had entirely vanished. Not a vestige of it was to be seen. The darkness and the mist had vanished with it, for it was a clear, cold, winter day, with snow upon the ground. "Good Heaven!" said **Logics**, clasping his hands together, as he looked about him. "I was bred in this place. I was a boy here!"

The Spirit gazed upon him mildly. Its gentle touch, though it had been light and instantaneous, appeared still present to the old man's sense of feeling. He was conscious of a thousand odours floating in the air, each one connected with a thousand thoughts, and hopes, and joys, and cares long, long, forgotten.

"Your lip is trembling," said the Ghost. "And what is that upon your cheek?"

Logics muttered, with an unusual catching in his voice, that it was a pimple; and begged the Ghost to lead him where he would.

"You recollect the way?" inquired the Spirit.

"Remember it!" cried **Logics** with fervour; "I could walk it blindfold."

"Strange to have forgotten it for so many years!" observed the Ghost.

"Let us go on."

They walked along the road; **Logics** recognising every gate, and post, and tree; until a little market-town appeared in the distance, with its bridge, its church, and winding river. Some shaggy ponies now were seen trotting towards them with boys upon their backs, who called to other boys in country gigs and carts, driven by

farmers. All these boys were in great spirits, and shouted to each other, until the broad fields were so full of merry music, that the crisp air laughed to hear it.

"These are but shadows of the things that have been," said the Ghost.
"They have no consciousness of us."

The jocund travellers came on; and as they came, **Logics** knew and named them every one. Why was he rejoiced beyond all bounds to see them! Why did his cold eye glisten, and his heart leap up as they went past! Why was he filled with gladness when he heard them give each other Merry Christmas, as they parted at cross-roads and bye-ways, for their several homes! What was merry Christmas to **Logics**? Out upon merry Christmas! What good had it ever done to him?

"The school is not quite deserted," said the Ghost. "A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still."

Logics said he knew it. And he sobbed.

They left the high-road, by a well-remembered lane, and soon approached a mansion of dull red brick, with a little weathercock-surmounted cupola, on the roof, and a bell hanging in it. It was a large house, but one of broken fortunes; for the spacious offices were little used, their walls were damp and mossy, their windows broken, and their gates decayed. Fowls clucked and strutted in the stables; and the coach-houses and sheds were over-run with grass. Nor was it more retentive of its ancient state, within; for entering the dreary hall, and glancing through the open doors of many rooms, they found them poorly furnished, cold, and vast. There was an earthy savour in the air, a chilly bareness in the place, which associated itself

somehow with too much getting up by candle-light, and not too much to eat.

They went, the Ghost and **Logics**, across the hall, to a door at the back of the house. It opened before them, and disclosed a long, bare, melancholy room, made barer still by lines of plain deal forms and desks. At one of these a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; and **Logics** sat down upon a form, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be.

Not a latent echo in the house, not a squeak and scuffle from the mice behind the paneling, not a drip from the half-thawed water-spout in the dull yard behind, not a sigh among the leafless boughs of one despondent poplar, not the idle swinging of an empty store-house door, no, not a clicking in the fire, but fell upon the heart of **Logics** with a softening influence, and gave a freer passage to his tears.

The Spirit touched him on the arm, and pointed to his younger self, intent upon his reading. Suddenly a man, in foreign garments: wonderfully real and distinct to look at: stood outside the window, with an axe stuck in his belt, and leading an ass laden with wood by the bridle.

"Why, it's Ali Baba! " **Logics** exclaimed in ecstasy. "It's dear old honest Ali Baba! Yes, yes, I know! One Christmas time, when yonder solitary child was left here all alone, he did come, for the first time, just like that. Poor boy! And Valentine," said **Logics**, "and his wild brother, Orson; there they go! And what's his name, who was put down in his drawers, asleep, at the Gate of Damascus; don't you see him! And the Sultan's Groom turned upside-down by the Genii; there

he is upon his head! Serve him right. I'm glad of it. What business had he to be married to the Princess!"

To hear **Logics** expending all the earnestness of his nature on such subjects, in a most extraordinary voice between laughing and crying; and to see his heightened and excited face; would have been a surprise to his business friends in the city, indeed.

"There's the Parrot!" cried **Logics**. "Green body and yellow tail, with a thing like a lettuce growing out of the top of his head; there he is! Poor Robin Crusoe, he called him, when he came home again after sailing round the island. "Poor Robin Crusoe, where have you been, Robin Crusoe?" The man thought he was dreaming, but he wasn't. It was the Parrot, you know. There goes Friday, running for his life to the little creek! Halloa! Hoop! Halloo!"

Then, with a rapidity of transition very foreign to his usual character, he said, in pity for his former self, "Poor boy!" and cried again.

"I wish," **Logics** muttered, putting his hand in his pocket, and looking about him, after drying his eyes with his cuff: "but it's too late now."

"What is the matter?" asked the Spirit.

"Nothing," said **Logics**. "Nothing. There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something: that's all."

The Ghost smiled thoughtfully, and waved its hand: saying as it did so, "Let us see another Christmas!"

Logics' former self grew larger at the words, and the room became a little darker and more dirty. The panels shrunk, the

windows cracked; fragments of plaster fell out of the ceiling, and the naked laths were shown instead; but how all this was brought about, **Logics** knew no more than you do. He only knew that it was quite correct; that everything had happened so; that there he was, alone again, when all the other boys had gone home for the jolly holidays. He was not reading now, but walking up and down despairingly. **Logics** looked at the Ghost, and with a mournful shaking of his head, glanced anxiously towards the door.

It opened; and a little girl, much younger than the boy, came darting in, and putting her arms about his neck, and often kissing him, addressed him as her "Dear, dear brother."

"I have come to bring you home, dear brother!" said the child, clapping her tiny hands, and bending down to laugh. "To bring you home, home, home!"

"Home, little Fan?" returned the boy.

"Yes!" said the child, brimful of glee. "Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home's like Heaven! He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said Yes, you should; and sent me in a coach to bring you. And you're to be a man!" said the child, opening her eyes, "and are never to come back here; but first, we're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world."

"You are quite a woman, little Fan!" exclaimed the boy.

She clapped her hands and laughed, and tried to touch his head; but being too little, laughed again, and stood on tiptoe to embrace him. Then she began to drag him, in her childish eagerness, towards the door; and he, nothing loth to go, accompanied her.

A terrible voice in the hall cried. "Bring down **Master Logics'** box, there! " and in the hall appeared the schoolmaster himself, who glared on **Master Logics** with a ferocious condescension, and threw him into a dreadful state of mind by shaking hands with him. He then conveyed him and his sister into the veriest old well of a shivering best-parlour that ever was seen, where the maps upon the wall, and the celestial and terrestrial globes in the windows, were waxy with cold. Here he produced a decanter of curiously light wine, and a block of curiously heavy cake, and administered instalments of those dainties to the young people: at the same time, sending out a meagre servant to offer a glass of something to the postboy, who answered that he thanked the gentleman, but if it was the same tap as he had tasted before, he had rather not. **Master Logics'** trunk being by this time tied on to the top of the chaise, the children bade the schoolmaster good-bye right willingly; and getting into it, drove gaily down the garden-sweep: the quick wheels dashing the hoar-frost and snow from off the dark leaves of the evergreens like spray. "Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered," said the Ghost. "But she had a large heart!" "So she had," cried **Logics**. "You're right, I will not gainsay it, Spirit. God forbid!" "She died a woman," said the Ghost, "and had, as I think, children." "One child," **Logics** returned. "True," said the Ghost. "Your nephew!" **Logics** seemed uneasy in his mind; and answered briefly, "Yes."

Although they had but that moment left the school behind them, they were now in the busy thoroughfares of a city, where shadowy passengers passed and repassed; where shadowy carts and coaches battle for the way, and all the strife and tumult of a real city

were. It was made plain enough, by the dressing of the shops, that here too it was Christmas time again; but it was evening, and the streets were lighted up.

The Ghost stopped at a certain warehouse door, and asked **Logics** if he knew it.

"Know it!" said **Logics**. "Was I apprenticed here!"

They went in. At sight of an old gentleman in a Welsh wig, sitting behind such a high desk, that if he had been two inches taller he must have knocked his head against the ceiling, **Logics** cried in great excitement:

"Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it's Fezziwig alive again!"

Old Fezziwig laid down his pen, and looked up at the clock, which pointed to the hour of seven. He rubbed his hands; adjusted his capacious waistcoat; laughed all over himself, from his shows to his organ of benevolence; and called out in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice:

"Yo ho, there! **Logics**! Dick!"

Logics' former self, now grown a young man, came briskly in, accompanied by his fellow-'prentice.

"Dick Wilkins, to be sure!" said **Logics** to the Ghost. "Bless me, yes. There he is. He was very much attached to me, was Dick. Poor Dick! Dear, dear!"

"Yo ho, my boys!" said Fezziwig. "No more work to-night. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas, **Logics**! Let's have the shutters up," cried old Fezziwig, with a sharp clap of his hands, "before a man can say, Jack Robinson!"

You wouldn't believe how those two fellows went at it! They charged into the street with the shutters - one, two, three - had 'em up in

their places -- four, five, six - barred 'em and pinned 'em - seven, eight, nine - and came back before you could have got to twelve, panting like race-horses.

"Hilli-ho!" cried old Fezziwig, skipping down from the high desk, with wonderful agility. "Clear away, my lads, and let's have lots of room here! Hilli-ho, Dick! Chirrup, **Logics!**"

Clear away! There was nothing they wouldn't have cleared away, or couldn't have cleared away, with old Fezziwig looking on. It was done in a minute. Every movable was packed off, as if it were dismissed from public life for evermore; the floor was swept and watered, the lamps were trimmed, fuel was heaped upon the fire; and the warehouse was as snug, and warm, and dry, and bright a ball-room, as you would desire to see upon a winter's night.

In came a fiddler with a music-book, and went up to the lofty desk, and made an orchestra of it, and tuned like fifty stomach-aches. In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast substantial smile. In came the three Miss Fezziwigs, beaming and lovable. In came the six young followers whose hearts they broke. In came all the young men and women employed in the business. In came the housemaid, with her cousin, the baker. In came the cook, with her brother's particular friend, the milkman. In came the boy from over the way, who was suspected of not having board enough from his master; trying to hide himself behind the girl from next door but one, who was proved to have had her ears pulled by her Mistress. In they all came, one after another; some shyly, some boldly, some gracefully, some awkwardly, some pushing, some pulling; in they all came, anyhow and everyhow.

Away they all went, twenty couple at once; hands half round and back again the other way; down the middle and up again; round and round in various stages of affectionate grouping; old top couple always turning up in the wrong place; new top couple starting off again, as soon as they got there; all top couples at last, and not a bottom one to help them. When this result was brought about, old Fezziwig, clapping his hands to stop the dance, cried out, "Well done!" and the fiddler plunged his hot face into a pot of porter, especially provided for that purpose. But scorning rest, upon his reappearance, he instantly began again, though there were no dancers yet, as if the other fiddler had been carried home, exhausted, on a shutter, and he were a bran-new man resolved to beat him out of sight, or perish.

There were more dances, and there were forfeits, and more dances, and there was cake, and there was negus, and there was a great piece of Cold Roast, and there was a great piece of Cold Boiled, and there were mince-pies, and plenty of beer. But the great effect of the evening came after the Roast and Boiled, when the fiddler (an artful dog, mind! The sort of man who knew his business better than you or I could have told it him!) struck up "Sir Roger de Coverley." Then old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs. Fezziwig. Top couple, too; with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them; three or four and twenty pair of partners; people who were not to be trifled with; people who would dance, and had no notion of walking.

But if they had been twice as many: ah, four times: old Fezziwig would have been a match for them, and so would Mrs. Fezziwig. As to her, she was worthy to be his partner in every sense of the term. If that's not high praise, tell me higher, and I'll use it. A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves. They shone in

every part of the dance like moons. You couldn't have predicted, at any given time, what would become of 'em next. And when old Fezziwig and Mrs. Fezziwig had gone all through the dance; advance and retire, hold hands with your partner, bow and curtsy; corkscrew; thread-the-needle, and back again to your place; Fezziwig cut - cut so deftly, that he appeared to wink with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger.

When the clock struck eleven, this domestic ball broke up. Mr and Mrs. Fezziwig took their stations, one on either side of the door, and shaking hands with every person individually as he or she went out, wished him or her a Merry Christmas. When everybody had retired but the two 'prentices, they did the same to them; and thus the cheerful voices died away, and the lads were left to their beds; which were under a counter in the back-shop.

During the whole of this time, **Logics** had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. He corroborated everything, remembered everything, enjoyed everything, and underwent the strangest agitation. It was not until now, when the bright faces of his former self and Dick were turned from them, that he remembered the Ghost, and became conscious that it was looking full upon him, while the light upon its head burnt very clear.

"A small matter," said the Ghost, "to make these silly folks so full of gratitude."

"Small!" echoed **Logics**.

The Spirit signed to him to listen to the two apprentices, who were pouring out their hearts in praise of Fezziwig; and when he had done so, said,

"Why! Is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?"

"It isn't that," said **Logics**, heated by the remark, and speaking unconsciously like his former, not his latter, self. "It isn't that, Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. Say that his power lies in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count 'em up: what then? The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune."

He felt the Spirit's glance, and stopped.

"What is the matter?" asked the Ghost.

"Nothing particular," said **Logics**.

"Something, I think?" the Ghost insisted.

"No," said **Logics**, "No. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now! That's all."

His former self turned down the lamps as he gave utterance to the wish; and **Logics** and the Ghost again stood side by side in the open air.

"My time grows short," observed the Spirit. "Quick!"

This was not addressed to **Logics**, or to any one whom he could see, but it produced an immediate effect. For again **Logics** saw himself. He was older now; a man in the prime of life. His face had not the harsh and rigid lines of later years; but it had begun to wear the signs of care and avarice. There was an eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye, which showed the passion that had taken root, and where the shadow of the growing tree would fall.

He was not alone, but sat by the side of a fair young girl in a mourning-dress: in whose eyes there were tears, which sparkled in the light that shone out of the **Ghost of Emotions Past**.

"It matters little," she said, softly. "To you, very little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve."

"What Idol has displaced you?" he rejoined.

"A golden one."

"This is the even-handed dealing of the world!" he said. "There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!"

"You fear the world too much," she answered, gently. "All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?"

"What then?" he retorted. "Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you."

She shook her head.

"Am I?"

"Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so, until, in good season, we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You are changed. When it was made, you were another man."

"I was a boy," he said impatiently.

"Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are," she returned. "I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I have thought of it, and can release you."

"Have I ever sought release?"

"In words. No. Never."

"In what, then?"

"In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; in another atmosphere of

life; another Hope as its great end. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If this had never been between us," said the girl, looking mildly, but with steadiness, upon him; "tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no!"

He seemed to yield to the justice of this supposition, in spite of himself. But he said with a struggle, "You think not."

"I would gladly think otherwise if I could," she answered, "Heaven knows! When I have learned a Truth like this, I know how strong and irresistible it must be. But if you were free to-day, to-morrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl - you who, in your very confidence with her, weigh everything by Gain: or, choosing her, if for a moment you were false enough to your one guiding principle to do so, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were."

He was about to speak; but with her head turned from him, she resumed.

"You may - the memory of what is past half makes me hope you will - have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the recollection of it, gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke. May you be happy in the life you have chosen!"

She left him, and they parted.

"Spirit!" said **Logics**, "show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me?"

"One shadow more!" exclaimed the Ghost.

"No more!" cried **Logics**. "No more. I don't wish to see it. Show me no more!"

But the relentless Ghost pinioned him in both his arms, and forced him to observe what happened next.

They were in another scene and place; a room, not very large or handsome, but full of comfort. Near to the winter fire sat a beautiful young girl, so like that last that **Logics** believed it was the same, until he saw her, now a comely matron, sitting opposite her daughter. The noise in this room was perfectly tumultuous, for there were more children there, than **Logics** in his agitated state of mind could count; and, unlike the celebrated herd in the poem, they were not forty children conducting themselves like one, but every child was conducting itself like forty. The consequences were uproarious beyond belief; but no one seemed to care; on the contrary, the mother and daughter laughed heartily, and enjoyed it very much; and the latter, soon beginning to mingle in the sports, got pillaged by the young brigands most ruthlessly. What would I not have given to one of them! Though I never could have been so rude, no, no! I wouldn't for the wealth of all the world have crushed that braided hair, and torn it down; and for the precious little shoe, I wouldn't have plucked it off, God bless my soul! to save my life. As to measuring her waist in sport, as they did, bold young brood, I couldn't have done it; I should have expected my arm to have grown round it for a punishment, and never come straight again. And yet I should have dearly liked, I own, to have touched her lips; to have questioned her, that she might have opened them; to have looked upon the lashes of her downcast eyes, and never raised a blush; to have let loose waves of hair, an inch of which would be a keepsake beyond price: in short, I should have liked, I do confess, to have had the lightest licence of a child, and yet to have been man enough to know its value.

But now a knocking at the door was heard, and such a rush immediately ensued that she with laughing face and plundered dress was borne towards it the centre of a flushed and boisterous group,

just in time to greet the father, who came home attended by a man laden with Christmas toys and presents. Then the shouting and the struggling, and the onslaught that was made on the defenceless porter! The scaling him, with chairs for ladders, to dive into his pockets, despoil him of brown-paper parcels, hold on tight by his cravat, hug him round the neck, pommel his back, and kick his legs in irrepressible affection! The shouts of wonder and delight with which the development of every package was received! The terrible announcement that the baby had been taken in the act of putting a doll's frying-pan into his mouth, and was more than suspected of having swallowed a fictitious turkey, glued on a wooden platter! The immense relief of finding this a false alarm! The joy, and gratitude, and ecstasy! They are all indescribable alike. It is enough that by degrees the children and their emotions got out of the parlour, and by one stair at a time, up to the top of the house; where they went to bed, and so subsided.

And now **Logics** looked on more attentively than ever, when the master of the house, having his daughter leaning fondly on him, sat down with her and her mother at his own fireside; and when he thought that such another creature, quite as graceful and as full of promise, might have called him father, and been a spring-time in the haggard winter of his life, his sight grew very dim indeed.

"Belle," said the husband, turning to his wife with a smile, "I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon."

"Who was it?"

"Guess!"

"How can I? Tut, don't I know." she added in the same breath, laughing as he laughed. "**Mr. Logics.**"

"**Mr. Logics** it was. I passed his office window; and as it was not shut

up, and he had a candle inside, I could scarcely help seeing him. His partner lies upon the point of death, I hear; and there he sat alone. Quite alone in the world, I do believe."

"Spirit!" said **Logics** in a broken voice, "remove me from this place."

"I told you these were shadows of the things that have been," said the Ghost. "That they are what they are, do not blame me!"

"Remove me!" **Logics** exclaimed, "I cannot bear it!"

He turned upon the Ghost, and seeing that it looked upon him with a face, in which in some strange way there were fragments of all the faces it had shown him, wrestled with it.

"Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!"

In the struggle, if that can be called a struggle in which the Ghost with no visible resistance on its own part was undisturbed by any effort of its adversary, **Logics** observed that its light was burning high and bright; and dimly connecting that with its influence over him, he seized the extinguisher-cap, and by a sudden action pressed it down upon its head.

The Spirit dropped beneath it, so that the extinguisher covered its whole form; but though **Logics** pressed it down with all his force, he could not hide the light, which streamed from under it, in an unbroken flood upon the ground.

He was conscious of being exhausted, and overcome by an irresistible drowsiness; and, further, of being in his own bedroom. He gave the cap a parting squeeze, in which his hand relaxed; and had barely time to reel to bed, before he sank into a heavy sleep.

Awaking in the middle of a prodigiously tough snore, and sitting up in bed to get his thoughts together, **Logics** had no occasion to be told that the bell was again upon the stroke of One. He felt that

he was restored to consciousness in the right nick of time, for the especial purpose of holding a conference with the second messenger despatched to him through **Mathematics'** intervention. But, finding that he turned uncomfortably cold when he began to wonder which of his curtains this new spectre would draw back, he put them every one aside with his own hands; and lying down again, established a sharp look-out all round the bed. For he wished to challenge the Spirit on the moment of its appearance, and did not wish to be taken by surprise, and made nervous.

Gentlemen of the free-and-easy sort, who plume themselves on being acquainted with a move or two, and being usually equal to the time-of-day, express the wide range of their capacity for adventure by observing that they are good for anything from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter; between which opposite extremes, no doubt, there lies a tolerably wide and comprehensive range of subjects. Without venturing for **Logics** quite as hardily as this, I don't mind calling on you to believe that he was ready for a good broad field of strange appearances, and that nothing between a baby and rhinoceros would have astonished him very much.

Now, being prepared for almost anything, he was not by any means prepared for nothing; and, consequently, when the Bell struck One, and no shape appeared, he was taken with a violent fit of trembling. Five minutes, ten minutes, a quarter of an hour went by, yet nothing came. All this time, he lay upon his bed, the very core and centre of a blaze of ruddy light, which streamed upon it when the clock proclaimed the hour; and which, being only light, was more alarming than a dozen ghosts, as he was powerless to make out what it meant, or would be at; and was sometimes apprehensive that he

might be at that very moment an interesting case of spontaneous combustion, without having the consolation of knowing it. At last, however, he began to think - as you or I would have thought at first; for it is always the person not in the predicament who knows what ought to have been done in it, and would unquestionably have done it too - at last, I say, he began to think that the source and secret of this ghostly light might be in the adjoining room, from whence, on further tracing it, it seemed to shine. This idea taking full possession of his mind, he got up softly and shuffled in his slippers to the door. The moment **Logics'** hand was on the lock, a strange voice called him by his name, and bade him enter. He obeyed.

It was his own room. There was no doubt about that. But it had undergone a surprising transformation. The walls and ceiling were so hung with living green, that it looked a perfect grove; from every part of which, bright gleaming berries glistened. The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflected back the light, as if so many little mirrors had been scattered there; and such a mighty blaze went roaring up the chimney, as that dull petrification of a hearth had never known in **Logics'** time, or **Mathematics'**, or for many and many a winter season gone. Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking-pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chesnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes, and seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam. In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see: who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty's horn, and held it up, high up, to shed its light on **Logics**, as he came peeping round the door.

"Come in!" exclaimed the Ghost. "Come in. and know me better, man!"

Logics entered timidly, and hung his head before this Spirit. He was not the dogged **Logics** he had been; and though the Spirit's eyes were clear and kind, he did not like to meet them.

"I am the **Ghost of Emotions Present**," said the Spirit. "Look upon me!"

Logics reverently did so. It was clothed in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. This garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the garment, were also bare; and on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free: free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air. Girded round its middle was an antique scabbard; but no sword was in it, and the ancient sheath was eaten up with rust.

"You have never seen the like of me before!" exclaimed the Spirit.

"Never," **Logics** made answer to it.

"Have never walked forth with the younger members of my family; meaning (for I am very young) my elder brothers born in these later years?" pursued the Phantom.

"I don't think I have," said **Logics**. "I am afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?"

"More than eighteen hundred," said the Ghost.

"A tremendous family to provide for!" muttered **Logics**.

The **Ghost of Emotions Present** rose.

"Spirit," said **Logics** submissively, "conduct me where you will. I went

forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson which is working now. To-night, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it."

"Touch my robe!"

Logics did as he was told, and held it fast.

Holly, mistletoe, red berries, ivy, turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, meat, pigs, sausages, oysters, pies, puddings, fruit, and punch, all vanished instantly. So did the room, the fire, the ruddy glow, the hour of night, and they stood in the city streets on Christmas morning, where (for the weather was severe) the people made a rough, but brisk and not unpleasant kind of music, in scraping the snow from the pavement in front of their dwellings, and from the tops of their houses: whence it was mad delight to the boys to see it come plumping down into the road below, and splitting into artificial little snow-storms.

The house fronts looked black enough, and the windows blacker, contrasting with the smooth white sheet of snow upon the roofs, and with the dirtier snow upon the ground; which last deposit had been ploughed up in deep furrows by the heavy wheels of carts and waggons; furrows that crossed and recrossed each other hundreds of times where the great streets branched off; and made intricate channels, hard to trace in the thick yellow mud and icy water. The sky was gloomy, and the shortest streets were choked up with a dingy mist, half thawed, half frozen, whose heavier particles descended in shower of sooty atoms, as if all the chimneys in Great Britain had, by one consent, caught fire, and were blazing away to their dear hearts' content. There was nothing very cheerful in the climate or the town, and yet was there an air of cheerfulness abroad

that the clearest summer air and brightest summer sun might have endeavoured to diffuse in vain.

For the people who were shovelling away on the housetops were jovial and full of glee; calling out to one another from the parapets, and now and then exchanging a facetious snowball - better-natured missile far than many a wordy jest - laughing heartily if it went right and not less heartily if it went wrong. The poulterers' shops were still half open, and the fruiterers' were radiant in their glory. There were great, round, pot-bellied baskets of chesnuts, shaped like the waistcoats of jolly old gentlemen, lolling at the doors, and tumbling out into the street in their apoplectic opulence. There were ruddy, brown-faced, broad-girthed Spanish Onions, shining in the fatness of their growth like Spanish Friars, and winking from their shelves in wanton slyness at the girls as they went by, and glanced demurely at the hung-up mistletoe. There were pears and apples, clustered high in blooming pyramids; there were bunches of grapes, made, in the shopkeepers' benevolence to dangle from conspicuous hooks, that people's mouths might water gratis as they passed; there were piles of filberts, mossy and brown, recalling, in their fragrance, ancient walks among the woods, and pleasant shufflings ankle deep through withered leaves; there were Norfolk Biffins, squab and swarthy, setting off the yellow of the oranges and lemons, and, in the great compactness of their juicy persons, urgently entreating and beseeching to be carried home in paper bags and eaten after dinner. The very gold and silver fish, set forth among these choice fruits in a bowl, though members of a dull and stagnant-blooded race, appeared to know that there was something going on; and, to a fish, went gasping round and round their little world in slow and passionless excitement.

The Grocers! oh the Grocers! nearly closed, with perhaps two shutters down, or one; but through those gaps such glimpses! It was not alone that the scales descending on the counter made a merry sound, or that the twine and roller parted company so briskly, or that the canisters were rattled up and down like juggling tricks, or even that the blended scents of tea and coffee were so grateful to the nose, or even that the raisins were so plentiful and rare, the almonds so extremely white, the sticks of cinnamon so long and straight, the other spices so delicious, the candied fruits so caked and spotted with molten sugar as to make the coldest lookers-on feel faint and subsequently bilious. Nor was it that the figs were moist and pulpy, or that the French plums blushed in modest tartness from their highly-decorated boxes, or that everything was good to eat and in its Christmas dress; but the customers were all so hurried and so eager in the hopeful promise of the day, that they tumbled up against each other at the door, crashing their wicker baskets wildly, and left their purchases upon the counter, and came running back to fetch them, and committed hundreds of the like mistakes, in the best humour possible; while the Grocer and his people were so frank and fresh that the polished hearts with which they fastened their aprons behind might have been their own, worn outside for general inspection, and for Christmas daws to peck at if they chose.

But soon the steeples called good people all, to church and chapel, and away they came, flocking through the streets in their best clothes, and with their gayest faces. And at the same time there emerged from scores of bye-streets, lanes, and nameless turnings, innumerable people, carrying their dinners to the baker's shops. The sight of these poor revellers appeared to interest the Spirit very much, for he stood with **Logics** beside him in a baker's doorway, and taking

off the covers as their bearers passed, sprinkled incense on their dinners from his torch. And it was a very uncommon kind of torch, for once or twice when there were angry words between some dinner-carriers who had jostled each other, he shed a few drops of water on them from it, and their good humour was restored directly. For they said, it was a shame to quarrel upon Christmas Day. And so it was! God love it, so it was!

In time the bells ceased, and the bakers' were shut up; and yet there was a genial shadowing forth of all these dinners and the progress of their cooking, in the thawed blotch of wet above each baker's oven; where the pavement smoked as if its stones were cooking too.

"Is there a peculiar flavour in what you sprinkle from your torch?" asked **Logics**.

"There is. My own."

"Would it apply to any kind of dinner on this day?" asked **Logics**.

"To any kindly given. To a poor one most."

"Why to a poor one most?" asked **Logics**.

"Because it needs it most."

"Spirit," said **Logics**, after a moment's thought, "I wonder you, of all the beings in the many worlds about us, should desire to cramp these people's opportunities of innocent enjoyment."

"I!" cried the Spirit.

"You would deprive them of their means of dining every seventh day, often the only day on which they can be said to dine at all," said

Logics. "Wouldn't you?"

"I!" cried the Spirit.

"You seek to close these places on the Seventh Day?" said **Logics**.

"And it comes to the same thing."

"I seek!" exclaimed the Spirit.

"Forgive me if I am wrong. It has been done in your name, or at least in that of your family," said **Logics**.

"There are some upon this earth of yours," returned the Spirit, "who lay claim to know us, and who do their deeds of passion, pride, ill-will, hatred, envy, bigotry, and selfishness in our name, who are as strange to us and all out kith and kin, as if they had never lived. Remember that, and charge their doings on themselves, not us."

Logics promised that he would; and they went on, invisible, as they had been before, into the suburbs of the town. It was a remarkable quality of the Ghost (which **Logics** had observed at the baker's), that notwithstanding his gigantic size, he could accommodate himself to any place with ease; and that he stood beneath a low roof quite as gracefully and like a supernatural creature, as it was possible he could have done in any lofty hall. And perhaps it was the pleasure the good Spirit had in showing off this power of his, or else it was his own kind, generous, hearty nature, and his sympathy with all poor men, that led him straight to **Logics'** clerk's; for there he went, and took **Logics** with him, holding to his robe; and on the threshold of the door the Spirit smiled, and stopped to bless Bob Cratchit's dwelling with the sprinkling of his torch. Think of that! Bob had but fifteen 'Bob' a-week himself; he pocketed on Saturdays but fifteen copies of his Christian name; and yet the **Ghost of Emotions Present** blessed his four-roomed house!

Then up rose Mrs. Cratchit, Cratchit's wife, dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence; and she laid the cloth, assisted by Belinda Cratchit, second of her daughters, also brave in ribbons;

while Master Peter Cratchit plunged a fork into the saucepan of potatoes, and getting the corners of his monstrous shirt collar (Bob's private property, conferred upon his son and heir in honour of the day) into his mouth, rejoiced to find himself so gallantly attired, and yearned to show his linen in the fashionable Parks. And now two smaller Cratchits, boy and girl, came tearing in, screaming that outside the baker's they had smelt the goose, and known it for their own; and basking in luxurious thoughts of sage-and-onion, these young Cratchits danced about the table, and exalted Master Peter Cratchit to the skies, while he (not proud, although his collars nearly choked him) blew the fire, until the slow potatoes bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan-lid to be let out and peeled.

"What has ever got your precious father then," said Mrs. Cratchit.

"And your brother, Tiny Tim! And Martha warn't as late last Christmas Day by half-an-hour!"

"Here's Martha, mother!" said a girl, appearing as she spoke.

"Here's Martha, mother!" cried the two young Cratchits. "Hurrah! There's such a goose, Martha!"

"Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are!" said Mrs. Cratchit, kissing her a dozen times, and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with officious zeal.

"We'd a deal of work to finish up last night," replied the girl, "and had to clear away this morning, mother!"

"Well! Never mind so long as you are come," said Mrs. Cratchit. "Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye!"

"No, no! There's father coming," cried the two young Cratchits, who were everywhere at once. "Hide, Martha, hide!"

So Martha hid herself, and in came little Bob, the father, with at least three feet of comforter exclusive of the fringe, hanging down

before him; and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable; and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame! "Why, where's our Martha?" cried Bob Cratchit, looking round.

"Not coming," said Mrs. Cratchit.

"Not coming!" said Bob, with a sudden declension in his high spirits; for he had been Tim's blood horse all the way from church, and had come home rampant. "Not coming upon Christmas Day!"

Martha didn't like to see him disappointed, if it were only in joke; so she came out prematurely from behind the closet door, and ran into his arms, while the two young Cratchits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the wash-house, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

"And how did little Tim behave?" asked Mrs. Cratchit, when she had rallied Bob on his credulity and Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart's content.

"As good as gold," said Bob, "and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see."

Bob's voice was tremulous when he told them this, and trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing strong and hearty. His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and back came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, escorted by his brother and sister to his stool before the fire; and while Bob, turning up his cuffs - as if, poor fellow, they were capable of being made more shabby - compounded some hot mixture in a jug with gin and

lemons, and stirred it round and round and put it on the hob to simmer; Master Peter, and the two ubiquitous young Cratchits went to fetch the goose, with which they soon returned in high procession.

Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds; a feathered phenomenon, to which a black swan was a matter of course; and in truth it was something very like it in that house. Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy (ready beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigour; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple-sauce; Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves, and mounting guard upon their posts, crammed spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped. At last the dishes were set on, and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving-knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast; but when she did, and when the long expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all round the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried Hurrah!

There never was such a goose. Bob said he didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavour, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration. Eked out by apple-sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family; indeed, as Mrs. Cratchit said with great delight (surveying one small atom of a bone upon the dish), they hadn't ate it all at last! Yet every one had had enough, and the youngest Cratchits

in particular, were steeped in sage and onion to the eyebrows! But now, the plates being changed by Miss Belinda, Mrs. Cratchit left the room alone - too nervous to bear witnesses - to take the pudding up, and bring it in.

Suppose it should not be done enough! Suppose it should break in turning out! Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the back-yard, and stolen it, while they were merry with the goose: a supposition at which the two young Cratchits became livid! All sorts of horrors were supposed.

Hallo! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper. A smell like a washing-day! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating-house and a pastrycook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that! That was the pudding. In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered: flushed, but smiling proudly: with the pudding, like a speckled cannon-ball, so hard and firm, blazing in half of half-a-quartern of ignited brandy, and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top.

Oh, a wonderful pudding! Bob Cratchit said, and calmly too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their marriage. Mrs. Cratchit said that now the weight was off her mind, she would confess she had had her doubts about the quantity of flour. Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing.

At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept, and the fire made up. The compound in the jug being tasted, and considered perfect, apples and oranges were put upon the table, and a shovel-full of chesnuts on the fire. Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth, in what Bob Cratchit called a circle, meaning half a one; and at Bob Cratchit's elbow stood the family display of glass; two tumblers, and a custard-cup without a handle. These held the hot stuff from the jug, however, as well as golden goblets would have done; and Bob served it out with beaming looks, while the chesnuts on the fire sputtered and cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed:

"A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!"

Which all the family re-echoed.

"God bless us every one!" said Tiny Tim, the last of all.

He sat very close to his father's side upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.

"Spirit," said **Logics**, with an interest he had never felt before, "tell me if Tiny Tim will live."

"I see a vacant seat," replied the Ghost, "in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die."

"No, no," said **Logics**. "Oh, no, kind Spirit! say he will be spared."

"If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race," returned the Ghost, "will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population."

Logics hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief.

"Man," said the Ghost, "if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and

Where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child. Oh God! to hear the Insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust!"

Logics bent before the Ghost's rebuke, and trembling cast his eyes upon the ground. But he raised them speedily, on hearing his own name.

"**Mr. Logics!**" said Bob; "I'll give you **Mr. Logics**, the Founder of the Feast!"

"The Founder of the Feast indeed!" cried Mrs. Cratchit, reddening. "I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it."

"My dear," said Bob, "the children; Christmas Day."

"It should be Christmas Day, I am sure," said she, "on which one drinks the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as **Mr. Logics**. You know he is, Robert! Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow!"

"My dear," was Bob's mild answer, "Christmas Day."

"I'll drink his health for your sake and the Day's," said Mrs. Cratchit, "not for his. Long life to him. A merry Christmas and a happy new year! He'll be very merry and very happy, I have no doubt!"

The children drank the toast after her. It was the first of their proceedings which had no heartiness. Tiny Tim drank it last of all, but he didn't care twopence for it. **Logics** was the Ogre of the family. The mention of his name cast a dark shadow on the party, which was not dispelled for full five minutes.

After it had passed away, they were ten times merrier than before, from the mere relief of **Logics** the Baleful being done with. Bob Cratchit told them how he had a situation in his eye for Master Peter, which would bring in, if obtained, full five-and-sixpence weekly. The two young Cratchits laughed tremendously at the idea of Peter's being a man of business; and Peter himself looked thoughtfully at the fire from between his collars, as if he were deliberating what particular investments he should favour when he came into the receipt of that bewildering income. Martha, who was a poor apprentice at a milliner's, then told them what kind of work she had to do, and how many hours she worked at a stretch, and how she meant to lie a-bed to-morrow morning for a good long rest; to-morrow being a holiday she passed at home. Also how she had seen a countess and a lord some days before, and how the lord "was much about as tall as Peter;" at which Peter pulled up his collars so high that you couldn't have seen his head if you had been there. All this time the chesnuts and the jug went round and round; and bye and bye they had a song, about a lost child travelling in the snow, from Tiny Tim; who had a plaintive little voice, and sang it very well indeed.

There was nothing of high mark in this. They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being water-proof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker's. But, they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time; and when they faded, and looked happier yet in the bright sprinklings of the Spirit's torch at parting, **Logics** had his eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last.

By this time it was getting dark, and snowing pretty heavily; and as **Logics** and the Spirit went along the streets, the brightness of the roaring fires in kitchens, parlours, and all sorts of rooms, was wonderful. Here, the flickering of the blaze showed preparations for a cosy dinner, with hot plates baking through and through before the fire, and deep red curtains, ready to be drawn to shut out cold and darkness. There all the children of the house were running out into the snow to meet their married sisters, brothers, cousins, uncles, aunts, and be the first to greet them. Here, again, were shadows on the window-blind of guests assembling; and there a group of handsome girls, all hooded and fur-booted, and all chattering at once, tripped lightly off to some near neighbour's house; where, woe upon the single man who saw them enter - artful witches, well they knew it - in a glow!

But, if you had judged from the numbers of people on their way to friendly gatherings, you might have thought that no one was at home to give them welcome when they got there, instead of every house expecting company, and piling up its fires half-chimney high. Blessings on it, how the Ghost exulted! How it bared its breadth of breast, and opened its capacious palm, and floated on, outpouring, with a generous hand, its bright and harmless mirth on everything within its reach! The very lamplighter, who ran on before, dotting the dusky street with specks of light, and who was dressed to spend the evening somewhere, laughed out loudly as the Spirit passed: though little kenne'd the lamplighter that he had any company but Christmas!

And now, without a word of warning from the Ghost, they stood upon a bleak and desert moor, where monstrous masses of

rude stone were cast about, as though it were the burial-place of giants; and water spread itself wheresoever it listed; or would have done so, but for the frost that held it prisoner; and nothing grew but moss and furze, and coarse, rank grass. Down in the west the setting sun had left a streak of fiery red, which glared upon the desolation for an instant, like a sullen eye, and frowning lower, lower, lower yet, was lost in the thick gloom of darkest night.

"What place is this?" asked **Logics**.

"A place where Miners live, who labour in the bowels of the earth," returned the Spirit. "But they know me. See!"

A light shone from the window of a hut, and swiftly they advanced towards it. Passing through the wall of mud and stone, they found a cheerful company assembled round a glowing fire. An old, old man and woman, with their children and their children's children, and another generation beyond that, all decked out gaily in their holiday attire. The old man, in a voice that seldom rose above the howling of the wind upon the barren waste, was singing them a Christmas song : it had been a very old song when he was a boy; and from time to time they all joined in the chorus. So surely as they raised their voices, the old man got quite blithe and loud; and so surely as they stopped, his vigour sank again.

The Spirit did not tarry here, but bade **Logics** hold his robe, and passing on above the moor, sped whither? Not to sea? To sea. To **Logics'** horror, looking back, he saw the last of the land, a frightful range of rocks, behind them; and his ears were deafened by the thundering of water, as it rolled, and roared, and raged among the dreadful caverns it had worn, and fiercely tried to undermine the earth.

Built upon a dismal reef of sunken rocks, some league or so from shore, on which the waters chafed and dashed, the wild year through, there stood a solitary lighthouse. Great heaps of sea-weed clung to its base, and storm-birds, born of the wind one might suppose, as sea-weed of the water, rose and fell about it, like the waves they skimmed.

But even here, two men who watched the light had made a fire, that through the loophole in the thick stone wall shed out a ray of brightness on the awful sea. Joining their seasoned hands over the rough table at which they sat, they wished each other Merry Christmas in their can of grog; and one of them: the elder, too, with his face all damaged and scarred with hard weather, as the figure-head of an old ship might be: struck up a sturdy song that was like a Gale in itself.

Again the Ghost sped on, above the black and heaving sea - on, on until, being far away, as he told **Logics**, from any shore, they lighted on a ship. They stood beside the helmsman at the wheel, the look-out in the bow, the officers who had the watch; dark, ghostly figures in their several stations; but every man among them hummed a Christmas tune, or had a Christmas thought, or spoke below his breath to his companion of some bygone Christmas Day, with homeward hopes belonging to it. And every man on board, waking or sleeping, good or bad, had had a kinder word for another on that day than on any day in the year; and had shared to some extent in its festivities; and had remembered those he cared for at a distance, and had known that they delighted to remember him.

It was a great surprise to **Logics**, while listening to the moaning of the wind, and thinking what a solemn thing it was to move on through the lonely darkness over an unknown abyss, whose depths were secrets as profound as Death: it was a great surprise to **Logics**, while thus engaged, to hear a hearty laugh. It was a much greater surprise to **Logics** to recognise it as his own nephew's and to find himself in a bright, dry, gleaming room, with the Spirit standing smiling by his side, and looking at that same nephew with approving affability!

"Ha, ha!" laughed **Logics'** nephew. "Ha, ha, ha!"

If you should happen, by any unlikely chance, to know a man more blest in a laugh than **Logics'** nephew, all I can say is, I should like to know him too. Introduce him to me, and I'll cultivate his acquaintance.

It is a fair, even-handed, noble adjustment of things, that while there is infection in disease and sorrow, there is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good-humour. When **Logics'** nephew laughed in this way: holding his sides, rolling his head, and twisting his face into the most extravagant contortions: **Logics'** niece, by marriage, laughed as heartily as he. And their assembled friends being not a bit behindhand, roared out lustily. "Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"He said that Christmas was a humbug, as I live!" cried **Logics'** nephew. "He believed it too!"

"More shame for him, Fred!" said **Logics'** niece, indignantly. Bless those women; they never do anything by halves. They are always in earnest.

She was very pretty: exceedingly pretty. With a dimpled, surprised-looking, capital face; a ripe little mouth, that seemed made to be kissed - as no doubt it was; all kinds of good little dots about her chin, that melted into one another when she laughed; and the sunniest pair of eyes you ever saw in any little creature's head. Altogether she was what you would have called provoking, you know; but satisfactory, too. Oh, perfectly satisfactory!

"He's a comical old fellow," said **Logics'** nephew, "that's the truth: and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him." "I'm sure he is very rich, Fred," hinted **Logics'** niece. "At least you always tell me so."

"What of that, my dear!" said **Logics'** nephew. "His wealth is of no use to him. He don't do any good with it. He don't make himself comfortable with it. He hasn't the satisfaction of thinking - ha, ha, ha! - that he is ever going to benefit Us with it."

"I have no patience with him," observed **Logics'** niece. **Logics'** niece's sisters, and all the other ladies, expressed the same opinion.

"Oh, I have!" said **Logics'** nephew. "I am sorry for him; I couldn't be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always. Here, he takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won't come and dine with us. What's the consequence? He don't lose much of a dinner."

"Indeed, I think he loses a very good dinner," interrupted **Logics'** niece. Everybody else said the same, and they must be allowed to have been competent judges, because they had just had dinner; and, with the dessert upon the table, were clustered round the fire, by lamplight.

"Well! I'm very glad to hear it," said **Logics'** nephew, "because I

haven't great faith in these young housekeepers. What do you say, Topper?"

Topper had clearly got his eye upon one of **Logics'** niece's sisters, for he answered that a bachelor was a wretched outcast, who had no right to express an opinion on the subject. Whereat **Logics'** niece's sister - the plump one with the lace tucker: not the one with the roses - blushed.

"Do go on, Fred," said **Logics'** niece, clapping her hands. "He never finishes what he begins to say. He is such a ridiculous fellow!"

Logics' nephew revelled in another laugh, and as it was impossible to keep the infection off; though the plump sister tried hard to do it with aromatic vinegar; his example was unanimously followed.

"I was only going to say," said **Logics'** nephew, "that the consequence of his taking a dislike to us, and not making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, either in his mouldy old office, or his dusty chambers. I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. He may rail at Christmas till he dies, but he can't help thinking better of it - I defy him - if he finds me going there, in good temper, year after year, and saying **Uncle Logics**, how are you? If it only puts him in the vein to leave his poor clerk fifty pounds, that's something; and I think I shook him yesterday." It was their turn to laugh now at the notion of his shaking **Logics**. But being thoroughly good-natured, and not much caring what they laughed at, so that they laughed at any rate, he encouraged them in their merriment, and passed the bottle joyously.

After tea, they had some music. For they were a musical family, and knew what they were about, when they sung a Glee or

Catch, I can assure you: especially Topper, who could growl away in the bass like a good one, and never swell the large veins in his forehead, or get red in the face over it. **Logics'** niece played well upon the harp; and played among other tunes a simple little air (a mere nothing: you might learn to whistle it in two minutes), which had been familiar to the child who fetched **Logics** from the boarding-school, as he had been reminded by the **Ghost of Emotions Past**. When this strain of music sounded, all the things that Ghost had shown him, came upon his mind; he softened more and more; and thought that if he could have listened to it often, years ago, he might have cultivated the kindnesses of life for his own happiness with his own hands, without resorting to the sexton's spade that buried **Mathematics**.

But they didn't devote the whole evening to music. After a while they played at forfeits; for it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child himself. Stop! There was first a game at blind-man's buff. Of course there was. And I no more believe Topper was really blind than I believe he had eyes in his boots. My opinion is, that it was a done thing between him and **Logics'** nephew; and that the **Ghost of Emotions Present** knew it. The way he went after that plump sister in the lace tucker, was an outrage on the credulity of human nature. Knocking down the fire-irons, tumbling over the chairs, bumping against the piano, smothering himself among the curtains, wherever she went, there went he. He always knew where the plump sister was. He wouldn't catch anybody else. If you had fallen up against him (as some of them did), on purpose, he would have made a feint of endeavouring to seize you, which would have been an affront to your understanding, and would instantly have sidled off in the direction of

the plump sister. She often cried out that it wasn't fair; and it really was not. But when at last, he caught her; when, in spite of all her silken rustlings, and her rapid flutterings past him, he got her into a corner whence there was no escape; then his conduct was the most execrable. For his pretending not to know her; his pretending that it was necessary to touch her head-dress, and further to assure himself of her identity by pressing a certain ring upon her finger, and a certain chain about her neck; was vile, monstrous. No doubt she told him her opinion of it, when, another blind-man being in office, they were so very confidential together, behind the curtains.

Logics' niece was not one of the blind-man's buff party, but was made comfortable with a large chair and a footstool, in a snug corner, where the Ghost and **Logics** were close behind her. But she joined in the forfeits, and loved her love to admiration with all the letters of the alphabet. Likewise at the game of How, When, and Where, she was very great, and to the secret joy of **Logics'** nephew, beat her sisters hollow: though they were sharp girls too, as Topper could have told you. There might have been twenty people there, young and old, but they all played, and so did **Logics**; for, wholly forgetting in the interest he had in what was going on, that his voice made no sound in their ears, he sometimes came out with his guess quite loud, and very often guessed quite right, too; for the sharpest needle, best Whitechapel, warranted not to cut in the eye, was not sharper than **Logics**; blunt as he took it in his head to be.

The Ghost was greatly pleased to find him in this mood, and looked upon him with such favour, that he begged like a boy to be allowed to stay until the guests departed. But this the Spirit said could not be done.

"Here is a new game," said **Logics**. "One half hour, Spirit, only one!"

It was a Game called Yes and No, where **Logics'** nephew had to think of something, and the rest must find out what; he only answering to their questions yes or no, as the case was. The brisk fire of questioning to which he was exposed, elicited from him that he was thinking of an animal, a live animal, rather a disagreeable animal, a savage animal, an animal that growled and grunted sometimes, and talked sometimes, and lived in London, and walked about the streets, and wasn't made a show of, and wasn't led by anybody, and didn't live in a menagerie, and was never killed in a market, and was not a horse, or an ass, or a cow, or a bull, or a tiger, or a dog, or a pig, or a cat, or a bear. At every fresh question that was put to him, this nephew burst into a fresh roar of laughter; and was so inexpressibly tickled, that he was obliged to get up off the sofa and stamp. At last the plump sister, falling into a similar state, cried out: "I have found it out! I know what it is, Fred! I know what it is!"

"What is it?" cried Fred.

"It's your Uncle Lo-o-o-gi-i-ics!"

Which it certainly was. Admiration was the universal sentiment, though some objected that the reply to "Is it a bear?" ought to have been "Yes;" inasmuch as an answer in the negative was sufficient to have diverted their thoughts from **Mr. Logics**, supposing they had ever had any tendency that way.

"He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure," said Fred, "and it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. Here is a glass of mulled wine ready to our hand at the moment; and I say, "**Uncle Logics!**"

"Well! **Uncle Logics.**" they cried.

"A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is!" said **Logics'** nephew. "He wouldn't take it from me, but may he

have it, nevertheless. **Uncle Logics!**"

Uncle Logics had imperceptibly become so happy and light of heart, that he would have pledged the unconscious company in return, and thanked them in an inaudible speech, if the Ghost had given him time. But the whole scene passed off in the breath of the last word spoken by his nephew; and he and the Spirit were again upon their travels.

Much they saw, and far they went, and many homes they visited, but always with a happy end. The Spirit stood beside sick beds, and they were cheerful; on foreign lands, and they were close at home; by struggling men, and they were patient in their greater hope; by poverty, and it was rich. In almshouse, hospital, and jail, in misery's every refuge, where vain man in his little brief authority had not made fast the door and barred the Spirit out, he left his blessing, and taught **Logics** his precepts.

It was a long night, if it were only a night; but **Logics** had his doubts of this, because the Christmas Holidays appeared to be condensed into the space of time they passed together. It was strange, too, that while **Logics** remained unaltered in his outward form, the Ghost grew older, clearly older. **Logics** had observed this change, but never spoke of it, until they left a children's Twelfth Night party, when, looking at the Spirit as they stood together in an open place, he noticed that its hair was grey.

"Are spirits' lives so short?" asked **Logics**.

"My life upon this globe, is very brief," replied the Ghost. "It ends to-night."

"To-night!" cried **Logics**.

"To-night at midnight. Hark! The time is drawing near."

The chimes were ringing the three quarters past eleven at that moment.

"Forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask," said **Logics**, looking intently at the Spirit's robe, "but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, protruding from your skirts. Is it a foot or a claw!"

"It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it," was the Spirit's sorrowful reply. "Look here."

From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. They knelt down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment.

"Oh, Man! look here. Look, look, down here!" exclaimed the Ghost. They were a boy and girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread.

Logics started back, appalled. Having them shown to him in this way, he tried to say they were fine children, but the words choked themselves, rather than be parties to a lie of such enormous magnitude.

"Spirit! are they yours?" **Logics** could say no more.

"They are Man's," said the Spirit, looking down upon them. "And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Arrogance. This

girl is Ignorance. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it!" cried the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. "Slander those who tell it ye! Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse! And bide the end!"

"Have they no refuge or resource?" cried **Logics**.

"Are there no prisons?" said the Spirit, turning on him for the last time with his own words. "Are there no workhouses?"

The bell struck twelve.

Logics looked about him for the Ghost, and saw it not. As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, he remembered the prediction of old **Mathematics**, and lifting up his eyes, beheld a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the ground, towards him.

The Phantom slowly, gravely, silently approached. When it came, **Logics** bent down upon his knee; for in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery.

It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand. But for this it would have been difficult to detach its figure from the night, and separate it from the darkness by which it was surrounded.

He felt that it was tall and stately when it came beside him, and that its mysterious presence filled him with a solemn dread. He knew no more, for the Spirit neither spoke nor moved.

"I am in the presence of the **Ghost of Emotions Yet To Come?**" said **Logics**.

The Spirit answered not, but pointed onward with its hand.

"You are about to show me shadows of the things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us," **Logics** pursued. "Is that so, Spirit?"

The upper portion of the garment was contracted for an instant in its folds, as if the Spirit had inclined its head. That was the only answer he received.

Although well used to ghostly company by this time, **Logics** feared the silent shape so much that his legs trembled beneath him, and he found that he could hardly stand when he prepared to follow it. The Spirit paused a moment, as observing his condition, and giving him time to recover.

But **Logics** was all the worse for this. It thrilled him with a vague uncertain horror, to know that behind the dusky shroud, there were ghostly eyes intently fixed upon him, while he, though he stretched his own to the utmost, could see nothing but a spectral hand and one great heap of black.

"Ghost of the Future!" he exclaimed, "I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company, and do it with a thankful heart. Will you not speak to me?"

It gave him no reply. The hand was pointed straight before them.

"Lead on!" said **Logics**. "Lead on! The night is waning fast, and it is

precious time to me, I know. Lead on, Spirit!"

The Phantom moved away as it had come towards him. **Logics** followed in the shadow of its attire, which bore him up, he thought, and carried him along.

They scarcely seemed to enter the city; for the city rather seemed to spring up about them, and encompass them of its own act. But there they were, in the heart of it; on Exchange Street, amongst the merchants; who hurried up and down, and chinked the money in their pockets, and conversed in groups, and looked at their watches, and trifled thoughtfully with their great gold seals; and so forth, as **Logics** had seen them often. The Spirit stopped beside one little knot of business men. Observing that the hand was pointed to them, **Logics** advanced to listen to their talk.

"No," said a great fat man with a monstrous chin, "I don't know much about it, either way. I only know he's dead."

"When did he die?" inquired another.

"Last night, I believe."

"Why, what was the matter with him?" asked a third, taking a vast quantity of snuff out of a very large snuff-box. "I thought he'd never die."

"God knows," said the first, with a yawn.

"What has he done with his money?" asked a red-faced gentleman with a pendulous excrescence on the end of his nose, that shook like the gills of a turkey-cock.

"I haven't heard," said the man with the large chin, yawning again.

"Left it to his Company, perhaps. He hasn't left it to me. That's all I know."

This pleasantry was received with a general laugh.

"It's likely to be a very cheap funeral," said the same speaker; "for upon my life I don't know of anybody to go to it. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer?"

"I don't mind going if a lunch is provided," observed the gentleman with the excrescence on his nose. "But I must be fed, if I make one." Another laugh.

"Well, I am the most disinterested among you, after all," said the first speaker, "for I never wear black gloves, and I never eat lunch. But I'll offer to go, if anybody else will. When I come to think of it, I'm not at all sure that I wasn't his most particular friend; for we used to stop and speak whenever we met. Bye, bye!"

Speakers and listeners strolled away, and mixed with other groups. **Logics** knew the men, and looked towards the Spirit for an explanation.

The Phantom glided on into a street. Its finger pointed to two persons meeting. **Logics** listened again, thinking that the explanation might lie here.

He knew these men, also, perfectly. They were men of business: very wealthy, and of great importance. He had made a point always of standing well in their esteem: in a business point of view, that is; strictly in a business point of view.

"How are you?" said one.

"How are you?" returned the other.

"Well!" said the first. "Old Scratch has got his own at last, hey?"

"So I am told," returned the second. "Cold, isn't it?"

"Seasonable for Christmas time. You're not a skater, I suppose?"

"No. No. Something else to think of. Good morning!"

Not another word. That was their meeting, their conversation, and their parting.

Logics was at first inclined to be surprised that the Spirit should attach importance to conversations apparently so trivial; but feeling assured that they must have some hidden purpose, he set himself to consider what it was likely to be. They could scarcely be supposed to have any bearing on the death of **Mathematics**, his old partner, for that was Past, and this Ghost's province was the Future. Nor could he think of any one immediately connected with himself, to whom he could apply them. But nothing doubting that to whomsoever they applied they had some latent moral for his own improvement, he resolved to treasure up every word he heard, and everything he saw; and especially to observe the shadow of himself when it appeared. For he had an expectation that the conduct of his future self would give him the clue he missed, and would render the solution of these riddles easy.

He looked about in that very place for his own image; but another man stood in his accustomed corner, and though the clock pointed to his usual time of day for being there, he saw no likeness of himself among the multitudes that poured in through the Porch. It gave him little surprise, however; for he had been revolving in his mind a change of life, and thought and hoped he saw his new-born resolutions carried out in this.

Quiet and dark, beside him stood the Phantom, with its outstretched hand. When he roused himself from his thoughtful quest, he fancied from the turn of the hand, and its situation in

reference to himself, that the Unseen Eyes were looking at him keenly. It made him shudder, and feel very cold.

They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of the town, where **Logics** had never penetrated before, although he recognised its situation, and its bad repute. The ways were foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half-naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offences of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth, and misery.

Far in this den of infamous resort, there was a low-browed, beetling shop, below a pent-house roof, where iron, old rags, bottles, bones, and greasy offal, were bought. Upon the floor within, were piled up heaps of rusty keys, nails, chains, hinges, files, scales, weights, and refuse iron of all kinds. Secrets that few would like to scrutinise were bred and hidden in mountains of unseemly rags, masses of corrupted fat, and sepulchres of bones. Sitting in among the wares he dealt in, by a charcoal stove, made of old bricks, was a grey-haired rascal, nearly seventy years of age; who had screened himself from the cold air without, by a frousy curtaining of miscellaneous tatters, hung upon a line; and smoked his pipe in all the luxury of calm retirement.

Logics and the Phantom came into the presence of this man, just as a woman with a heavy bundle slunk into the shop. But she had scarcely entered, when another woman, similarly laden, came in too; and she was closely followed by a man in faded black, who was no less startled by the sight of them, than they had been upon the

recognition of each other. After a short period of blank astonishment, in which the old man with the pipe had joined them, they all three burst into a laugh.

"Let the charwoman alone to be the first!" cried she who had entered first. "Let the laundress alone to be the second; and let the undertaker's man alone to be the third. Look here, old Joe, here's a chance! If we haven't all three met here without meaning it!"

"You couldn't have met in a better place," said old Joe, removing his pipe from his mouth. "Come into the parlour. You were made free of it long ago, you know; and the other two an't strangers. Stop till I shut the door of the shop. Ah! How it skreeks! There an't such a rusty bit of metal in the place as its own hinges, I believe; and I'm sure there's no such old bones here, as mine. Ha, ha! We're all suitable to our calling, we're well matched. Come into the parlour. Come into the parlour."

The parlour was the space behind the screen of rags. The old man raked the fire together with an old stair-rod, and having trimmed his smoky lamp (for it was night), with the stem of his pipe, put it in his mouth again.

While he did this, the woman who had already spoken threw her bundle on the floor, and sat down in a flaunting manner on a stool; crossing her elbows on her knees, and looking with a bold defiance at the other two.

"What odds then! What odds, Mrs. Dilber?" said the woman. "Every person has a right to take care of themselves. He always did!"

"That's true, indeed!" said the laundress. "No man more so."

"Why then, don't stand staring as if you was afraid, woman; who's the

wiser? We're not going to pick holes in each other's coats, I suppose?" "No, indeed!" said Mrs. Dilber and the man together. "We should hope not."

"Very well, then!" cried the woman. "That's enough. Who's the worse for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose."

"No, indeed!" said Mrs. Dilber, laughing.

"If he wanted to keep 'em after he was dead, a wicked old screw," pursued the woman, "why wasn't he natural in his lifetime? If he had been, he'd have had somebody to look after him when he was struck with Death, instead of lying gasping out his last there, alone by himself."

"It's the truest word that ever was spoke," said Mrs. Dilber. "It's a judgment on him."

"I wish it was a little heavier judgment," replied the woman; "and it should have been, you may depend upon it, if I could have laid my hands on anything else. Open that bundle, old Joe, and let me know the value of it. Speak out plain. I'm not afraid to be the first, nor afraid for them to see it. We know pretty well that we were helping ourselves, before we met here, I believe. It's no sin. Open the bundle, Joe."

But the gallantry of her friends would not allow of this; and the man in faded black, mounting the breach first, produced his plunder. It was not extensive. A seal or two, a pencil-case, a pair of sleeve-buttons, and a brooch of no great value, were all. They were severally examined and appraised by old Joe, who chalked the sums he was disposed to give for each, upon the wall, and added them up into a total when he found there was nothing more to come.

"That's your account," said Joe, "and I wouldn't give another sixpence, if I was to be boiled for not doing it. Who's next?"

Mrs. Dilber was next. Sheets and towels, a little wearing apparel, two old-fashioned silver teaspoons, a pair of sugar-tongs, and a few boots. Her account was stated on the wall in the same manner.

"I always give too much to ladies. It's a weakness of mine, and that's the way I ruin myself," said old Joe. "That's your account. If you asked me for another penny, and made it an open question, I'd repent of being so liberal and knock off half-a-crown."

"And now undo my bundle, Joe," said the first woman.

Joe went down on his knees for the greater convenience of opening it, and having unfastened a great many knots, dragged out a large and heavy roll of some dark stuff.

"What do you call this," said Joe. "Bed-curtains!"

"Ah!" returned the woman, laughing and leaning forward on her crossed arms. "Bed-curtains!"

"You don't mean to say you took them down, rings and all, with him lying there?" said Joe.

"Yes I do," replied the woman. "Why not?"

"You were born to make your fortune," said Joe, "and you'll certainly do it."

"I certainly shan't hold my hand, when I can get anything in it by reaching it out, for the sake of such a man as He was, I promise you, Joe," returned the woman coolly. "don't drop that oil upon the blankets, now."

"His blankets?" asked Joe.

"Whose else's do you think?" replied the woman. "He isn't likely to take cold without 'em, I dare say."

"I hope he didn't die of any thing catching? Eh?" said old Joe, stopping in his work, and looking up.

"Don't you be afraid of that," returned the woman. "I an't so fond of his company that I'd loiter about him for such things, if he did. Ah!

you may look through that shirt till your eyes ache; but you won't find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. It's the best he had, and a fine one too. They'd have wasted it, if it hadn't been for me."

"What do you call wasting of it?" asked old Joe.

"Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure," replied the woman with a laugh. "Somebody was fool enough to do it, but I took it off again. If calico an't good enough for such a purpose, it isn't good enough for anything. It's quite as becoming to the body. He can't look uglier than he did in that one."

Logics listened to this dialogue in horror. As they sat grouped about their spoil, in the scanty light afforded by the old man's lamp, he viewed them with a detestation and disgust, which could hardly have been greater, though they had been obscene demons, marketing the corpse itself.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the same woman, when old Joe, producing a flannel bag with money in it, told out their several gains upon the ground. "This is the end of it, you see! He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Spirit!" said **Logics**, shuddering from head to foot. "I see, I see. The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way, now. Merciful Heaven, what is this!"

He recoiled in terror, for the scene had changed, and now he almost touched a bed: a bare, uncurtained bed: on which, beneath a ragged sheet, there lay a something covered up, which, though it was

dumb, announced itself in awful language.

The room was very dark, too dark to be observed with any accuracy, though **Logics** glanced round it in obedience to a secret impulse, anxious to know what kind of room it was. A pale light, rising in the outer air, fell straight upon the bed; and on it, plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man.

Logics glanced towards the Phantom. Its steady hand was pointed to the head. The cover was so carelessly adjusted that the slightest raising of it, the motion of a finger upon **Logics'** part, would have disclosed the face. He thought of it, felt how easy it would be to do, and longed to do it; but had no more power to withdraw the veil than to dismiss the spectre at his side.

Oh cold, cold, rigid, dreadful Death, set up thine altar here, and dress it with such terrors as thou hast at thy command: for this is thy dominion! But of the loved, revered, and honoured head, thou canst not turn one hair to thy dread purposes, or make one feature odious. It is not that the hand is heavy and will fall down when released; it is not that the heart and pulse are still; but that the hand was open, generous, and true; the heart brave, warm, and tender; and the pulse a man's. Strike, Shadow, strike! And see his good deeds springing from the wound, to sow the world with life immortal.

No voice pronounced these words in **Logics'** ears, and yet he heard them when he looked upon the bed. He thought, if this man could be raised up now, what would be his foremost thoughts?

Avarice, hard-dealing, griping cares? They have brought him to a rich end, truly!

He lay, in the dark empty house, with not a man, a woman, or a child, to say that he was kind to me in this or that, and for the memory of one kind word I will be kind to him. A cat was tearing at the door, and there was a sound of gnawing rats beneath the hearth-stone. What they wanted in the room of death, and why they were so restless and disturbed, **Logics** did not dare to think.

"Spirit!" he said, "this is a fearful place. In leaving it, I shall not leave its lesson, trust me. Let us go!"

Still the Ghost pointed with an unmoved finger to the head.

"I understand you," **Logics** returned, "and I would do it, if I could.

But I have not the power, Spirit. I have not the power."

Again it seemed to look upon him.

"If there is any person in the town, who feels emotion caused by this man's death," said **Logics** quite agonised, "show that person to me, Spirit, I beseech you!"

The Phantom spread its dark robe before him for a moment, like a wing; and withdrawing it, revealed a room by daylight, where a mother and her children were. She was expecting some one, and with anxious eagerness; for she walked up and down the room; started at every sound; looked out from the window; glanced at the clock; tried, but in vain, to work with her needle; and could hardly bear the voices of the children in their play.

At length the long-expected knock was heard. She hurried to the door, and met her husband; a man whose face was careworn and

depressed, though he was young. There was a remarkable expression in it now; a kind of serious delight of which he felt ashamed, and which he struggled to repress.

He sat down to the dinner that had been boarding for him by the fire; and when she asked him faintly what news (which was not until after a long silence), he appeared embarrassed how to answer.

"Is it good," she said, "or bad?" - to help him.

"Bad," he answered.

"We are quite ruined?"

"No. There is hope yet, Caroline."

"If he relents," she said, amazed, "there is. Nothing is past hope, if such a miracle has happened."

"He is past relenting," said her husband. "He is dead."

She was a mild and patient creature if her face spoke truth; but she was thankful in her soul to hear it, and she said so, with clasped hands. She prayed forgiveness the next moment, and was sorry; but the first was the emotion of her heart.

"What the half-drunken woman whom I told you of last night, said to me, when I tried to see him and obtain a week's delay; and what I thought was a mere excuse to avoid me; turns out to have been quite true. He was not only very ill, but dying, then."

"To whom will our debt be transferred?"

"I don't know. But before that time we shall be ready with the money; and even though we were not, it would be a bad fortune indeed to find so merciless a creditor in his successor. We may sleep to-night with light hearts, Caroline!"

Yes. Soften it as they would, their hearts were lighter. The children's faces, hushed and clustered round to hear what they so little understood, were brighter; and it was a happier house for this man's death! The only emotion that the Ghost could show him, caused by the event, was one of pleasure.

"Let me see some tenderness connected with a death," said **Logics**; "or that dark chamber, Spirit, which we left just now, will be for ever present to me."

The Ghost conducted him through several streets familiar to his feet; and as they went along, **Logics** looked here and there to find himself, but nowhere was he to be seen. They entered poor Bob Cratchit's house; the dwelling he had visited before; and found the mother and the children seated round the fire.

Quiet. Very quiet. The noisy little Cratchits were as still as statues in one corner, and sat looking up at Peter, who had a book before him. The mother and her daughters were engaged in sewing. But surely they were very quiet!

"And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them."

Where had **Logics** heard those words? He had not dreamed them.

The boy must have read them out, as he and the Spirit crossed the threshold. Why did he not go on?

The mother laid her work upon the table, and put her hand up to her face.

"The colour hurts my eyes," she said.

The colour? Ah, poor Tiny Tim!

"They're better now again," said Cratchit's wife. "It makes them weak by candle-light; and I wouldn't show weak eyes to your father when

he comes home, for the world. It must be near his time."

"Past it rather," Peter answered, shutting up his book. "But I think he has walked a little slower than he used, these few last evenings, mother."

They were very quiet again. At last she said, and in a steady, cheerful voice, that only faltered once:

"I have known him walk with - I have known him walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed."

"And so have I," cried Peter. "Often."

"And so have I!" exclaimed another. So had all.

"But he was very light to carry," she resumed, intent upon her work, "and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble: no trouble. And there is your father at the door!"

She hurried out to meet him; and little Bob in his comforter - he had need of it, poor fellow - came in. His tea was ready for him on the hob, and they all tried who should help him to it most. Then the two young Cratchits got upon his knees and laid, each child a little cheek, against his face, as if they said, "Don't mind it, father. Don't be grieved!"

Bob was very cheerful with them, and spoke pleasantly to all the family. He looked at the work upon the table, and praised the industry and speed of Mrs Cratchit and the girls. They would be done long before Sunday, he said.

"Sunday! You went to-day, then, Robert?" said his wife.

"Yes, my dear," returned Bob. "I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. But you'll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday. My little,

little child!" cried Bob. "My little child!"

He broke down all at once. He couldn't help it. If he could have helped it, he and his child would have been farther apart perhaps than they were.

He left the room, and went up-stairs into the room above, which was lighted cheerfully, and hung with Christmas. There was a chair set close beside the child, and there were signs of some one having been there, lately. Poor Bob sat down in it, and when he had thought a little and composed himself, he kissed the little face. He was reconciled to what had happened, and went down again quite happy.

They drew about the fire, and talked; the girls and mother working still. Bob told them of the extraordinary kindness of **Mr. Logics'** nephew, whom he had scarcely seen but once, and who, meeting him in the street that day, and seeing that he looked a little - "just a little down you know," said Bob, inquired what had happened to distress him. "On which," said Bob, "for he is the pleasantest-spoken gentleman you ever heard, I told him. "I am heartily sorry for it, Mr. Cratchit," he said, "and heartily sorry for your good wife." By the bye, how he ever knew that, I don't know."

"Knew what, my dear?"

"Why, that you were a good wife," replied Bob.

"Everybody knows that." said Peter.

"Very well observed, my boy." cried Bob. "I hope they do. "Heartily sorry," he said, "for your good wife. If I can be of service to you in any way," he said, giving me his card, "that's where I live. Pray come to me." Now, it wasn't," cried Bob, "for the sake of anything he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way, that this was quite

delightful. It really seemed as if he had known our Tiny Tim, and felt with us."

"I'm sure he's a good soul!" said Mrs. Cratchit.

"You would be surer of it, my dear," returned Bob, "if you saw and spoke to him. I shouldn't be at all surprised, mark what I say, if he got Peter a better situation."

"Only hear that, Peter," said Mrs. Cratchit.

"And then," cried one of the girls, "Peter will be keeping company with some one, and setting up for himself."

"Get along with you!" retorted Peter, grinning.

"It's just as likely as not," said Bob, "one of these days; though there's plenty of time for that, my dear. But however and whenever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim - shall we - or this first parting that there was among us?"

"Never, father!" cried they all.

"And I know," said Bob, "I know, my dears, that when we recollect how patient and how mild he was; although he was a little, little child; we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it."

"No, never, father!" they all cried again.

"I am very happy," said little Bob, "I am very happy!"

Mrs. Cratchit kissed him, his daughters kissed him, the two young Cratchits kissed him, and Peter and himself shook hands. Spirit of Tiny Tim, thy childish essence was from God!

"Spectre," said **Logics**, "something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how. Tell me what man that was whom we saw lying dead?"

The **Ghost of Emotions Yet To Come** conveyed him, as before - though at a different time, he thought: indeed, there seemed no order

in these latter visions, save that they were in the Future - into the resorts of business men, but showed him not himself. Indeed, the Spirit did not stay for anything, but went straight on, as to the end just now desired, until besought by **Logics** to tarry for a moment. "This courts," said **Logics**, "through which we hurry now, is where my place of occupation is, and has been for a length of time. I see the house. Let me behold what I shall be, in days to come." The Spirit stopped; the hand was pointed elsewhere. "The house is yonder," **Logics** exclaimed. "Why do you point away?" The inexorable finger underwent no change.

Logics hastened to the window of his office, and looked in. It was an office still, but not his. The furniture was not the same, and the figure in the chair was not himself. The Phantom pointed as before. He joined it once again, and wondering why and whither he had gone, accompanied it until they reached an iron gate. He paused to look round before entering.

A churchyard. Here, then, the wretched man whose name he had now to learn, lay underneath the ground. It was a worthy place. Walled in by houses; overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation's death, not life; choked up with too much burying; fat with repleted appetite. A worthy place!

The Spirit stood among the graves, and pointed down to One. He advanced towards it trembling. The Phantom was exactly as it had been, but he dreaded that he saw new meaning in its solemn shape. "Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point," said **Logics**, "answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only?"

Still the Ghost pointed downward to the grave by which it stood.

"Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead," said **Logics**. "But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me!" The Spirit was immovable as ever.

Logics crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, **Logics**.

"Am I that man who lay upon the bed?" he cried, upon his knees.

The finger pointed from the grave to him, and back again.

"No, Spirit! Oh no, no!"

The finger still was there.

"Spirit!" he cried, tight clutching at its robe, "hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this communion. Why show me this, if I am past all hope?"

For the first time the hand appeared to shake.

"Good Spirit," he pursued, as down upon the ground he fell before it:

"Your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life!" The kind hand trembled.

"I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!"

In his agony, he caught the spectral hand. It sought to free itself, but he was strong in his entreaty, and detained it. The Spirit,

stronger yet, repulsed him.

Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed, he saw an alteration in the Phantom's hood and dress. It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost.

Yes! and the bedpost was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the time before him was his own, to make amends in!

"I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!" **Logics** repeated, as he scrambled out of bed. "The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. Oh **Mathematics!** Heaven, and the Christmas Time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old **Mathematics**; on my knees!"

He was so fluttered and so glowing with his good intentions, that his broken voice would scarcely answer to his call. He had been sobbing violently in his conflict with the Spirit, and his face was wet with tears.

"They are not torn down," cried **Logics**, folding one of his bed-curtains in his arms, "they are not torn down, rings and all. They are here: I am here: the shadows of the things that would have been, may be dispelled. They will be. I know they will!"

His hands were busy with his garments all this time: turning them inside out, putting them on upside down, tearing them, mislaying them, making them parties to every kind of extravagance. "I don't know what to do!" cried **Logics**, laughing and crying in the same breath; and making a perfect Laocoön of himself with his

stockings. "I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a school-boy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to every-body! A happy New Year to all the world! Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!"

He had frisked into the sitting-room, and was now standing there: perfectly winded.

"There's the saucepan that the gruel was in!" cried **Logics**, starting off again, and going round the fire-place. "There's the door, by which the **Ghost of Mathematics** entered! There's the corner where the **Ghost of Emotions Present**, sat! There's the window where I saw the wandering Spirits! It's all right, it's all true, it all happened. Ha ha ha!"

Really, for a man who had been out of practice for so many years, it was a splendid laugh, a most illustrious laugh. The father of a long, long line of brilliant laughs!

"I don't know what day of the month it is!" said **Logics**. "I don't know how long I've been among the Spirits. I don't know anything. I'm quite a baby. Never mind. I don't care. I'd rather be a baby. Hallo! Whoop! Hallo here!"

He was checked in his transports by the churches ringing out the lustiest peals he had ever heard. Clash, clang, hammer, ding, dong, bell. Bell, dong, ding, hammer, clang, clash! Oh, glorious, glorious!

Running to the window, he opened it, and put out his stirring, cold cold, piping for the blood to dance to; Golden sunlight; Heavenly sky; sweet fresh air; merry bells. Oh, glorious. Glorious!

"What's to-day?" cried **Logics**, calling downward to a boy in Sunday clothes, who perhaps had loitered in to look about him.

"Eh? " returned the boy, with all his might of wonder.

"What's to-day, my fine fellow?" said **Logics**.

"To-day?" replied the boy. "Why, CHRISTMAS DAY."

"It's Christmas Day!" said **Logics** to himself. "I haven 't missed it. The Spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can. Of course they can. Hallo, my fine fellow!"

"Hallo!" returned the boy

"Do you know the Poulterer's, in the next street but one, at the corner?" **Logics** inquired.

"I should hope I did," replied the lad.

"An intelligent boy!" said **Logics**. "A remarkable boy! Do you know whether they've sold the prize Turkey that was hanging up there? Not the little prize Turkey; the big one?"

"What, the one as big as me?" returned the boy.

"What a delightful boy!" said **Logics**. "It's a pleasure to talk to him. Yes, my buck!"

"It's hanging there now," replied the boy.

"Is it?" said **Logics**. "Go and buy it."

"Walk-ER!" exclaimed the boy.

"No, no," said **Logics**, "I am in earnest. Go and buy it, and tell 'em to bring it here, that I may give them the direction where to take it. Come back with the man, and I'll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than five minutes, and I'll give you half-a-crown!"

"I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's!" whispered **Logics**, rubbing his hands, and splitting with a laugh. "He sha'n't know who sends it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim. Joe Miller never made such a joke as sending it to Bob's will be!"

The hand in which he wrote the address was not a steady one, but write it he did, somehow, and went down stairs to open the street door, ready for the coming of the poulterer's man. As he stood there, waiting his arrival, the knocker caught his eye.

"I shall love it, as long as I live!" cried **Logics**, patting it with his hand. "I scarcely ever looked at it before. What an honest expression it has in its face! It's a wonderful knocker! - Here's the Turkey. Hallo! Whoop! How are you! Merry Christmas!"

It was a Turkey! He never could have stood upon his legs, that bird. He would have snapped 'em short off in a minute, like sticks of sealing-wax.

"Why, it's impossible to carry that to Camden Town," said **Logics**. "You must have a cab."

The chuckle with which he said this, and the chuckle with which he paid for the Turkey, and the chuckle with which he paid for the cab, and the chuckle with which he recompensed the boy, were only to be exceeded by the chuckle with which he sat down breathless in his chair again, and chuckled till he cried.

Shaving was not an easy task, for his hand continued to shake very much; and shaving requires attention, even when you don't dance while you are at it. But if he had cut the end of his nose off, he would have put a piece of sticking-plaister over it, and been quite satisfied.

He dressed himself all in his best, and at last got out into the streets. The people were by this time pouring forth, as he had seen them with the **Ghost of Emotions Present**; and walking with his hands behind him, **Logics** regarded every one with a delighted smile.

He looked so irresistibly pleasant, in a word, that three or four good-humoured fellows said, "Good morning, sir! A merry Christmas to you!" And **Logics** said often afterwards, that of all the blithe sounds he had ever heard, those were the blithest in his ears.

He had not gone far, when coming on towards him he beheld the portly gentleman, who had walked into his counting-house the day before, and said, "**Logics** and **Mathematics**", I believe?" It sent a pang across his heart to think how this old gentleman would look upon him when they met; but he knew what path lay straight before him, and he took it.

"My dear sir," said **Logics**, quickening his pace, and taking the old gentleman by both his hands. "How do you do? I hope you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of you. A merry Christmas to you, sir!"

"**Mr. Logics?**"

"Yes," said **Logics**. "That is my name, and I fear it may not be pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your pardon. And will you have the goodness - " here **Logics** whispered in his ear.

"Lord bless me!" cried the gentleman, as if his breath were gone. "My dear **Mr. Logics**, are you serious?"

"If you please," said **Logics**. "Not a farthing less. A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you do me that favour?"

"My dear sir," said the other, shaking hands with him. "I don't know what to say to such munifi -"

"Don't say anything, please," retorted **Logics**. "Come and see me. Will you come and see me?"

"I will!" cried the old gentleman. And it was clear he meant to do it.

"Thank 'ee," said **Logics**. "I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you!"

He went to church, and walked about the streets, and watched the people hurrying to and fro, and patted children on the head, and questioned beggars, and looked down into the kitchens of houses, and up to the windows: and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He had never dreamed that any walk - that anything - could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon he turned his steps towards his nephew's house.

He passed the door a dozen times, before he had the courage to go up and knock. But he made a dash, and did it:

"Is your master at home, my dear?" said **Logics** to the girl. Nice girl! Very.

"Yes, sir."

"Where is he, my love?" said **Logics**.

"He's in the dining-room, sir, along with mistress. I'll show you upstairs, if you please."

"Thank 'ee. He knows me," said **Logics**, with his hand already on the dining-room lock. "I'll go in here, my dear."

He turned it gently, and sidled his face in, round the door. They were looking at the table (which was spread out in great array); for these young housekeepers are always nervous on such points, and like to see that everything is right.

"Fred!" said **Logics**.

Dear heart alive, how his niece by marriage started! **Logics** had forgotten, for the moment, about her sitting in the corner with the footstool, or he wouldn't have done it, on any account.

"Why bless my soul!" cried Fred, "who's that?"

"It's I. Your uncle **Logics**. I have come to dinner. Will you let me in, Fred?"

Let him in! It is a mercy he didn't shake his arm off. He was at home in five minutes. Nothing could be heartier. His niece looked just the same. So did Topper when he came. So did the plump sister when she came. So did every one when they came. Wonderful party, wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, won-der-ful happiness!

But he was early at the office next morning. Oh, he was early there. If he could only be there first, and catch Bob Cratchit coming late! That was the thing he had set his heart upon.

And he did it; yes he did! The clock struck nine. No Bob. A quarter past. No Bob. He was full eighteen minutes and a half, behind his time. **Logics** sat with his door wide open, that he might see him come into the Tank.

His hat was off, before he opened the door; his comforter too. He was on his stool in a jiffy; driving away with his pen, as if he were trying to overtake nine o'clock.

"Hallo!" growled **Logics**, in his accustomed voice, as near as he could feign it. "What do you mean by coming here at this time of day."

"I am very sorry, sir," said Bob. "I am behind my time."

"You are?" repeated **Logics**. "Yes. I think you are. Step this way, if you please."

"It's only once a year, sir," pleaded Bob, appearing from the Tank. "It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir."

"Now, I'll tell you what, my friend," said **Logics**, "I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore," he continued,

leaping from his stool, and giving Bob such a dig in the waistcoat that he staggered back into the Tank again: "and therefore I am about to raise your salary!"

Bob trembled, and got a little nearer to the ruler. He had a momentary idea of knocking **Logics** down with it; holding him, and calling to the people in the court for help and a strait-waistcoat. "A merry Christmas, Bob!" said **Logics**, with an earnestness that could not be mistaken, as he clapped him on the back. "A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year! I'll raise your salary, and endeavour to assist your struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon, over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop, Bob! Make up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle before you dot another i, Bob Cratchit."

Logics was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world. Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh, and little heeded them; for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe, for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset; and knowing that such as these would be blind anyway, he thought it quite as well that they should wrinkle up their eyes in grins, as have the malady in less attractive forms. His own heart laughed: and that was quite enough for him.

He had no further communion with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; and it was always said of

him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God Bless Us, Every One!

Charles (happily) And that Risteárd and Receptive is my story on harmonious relationships.

Moments of reflective silence.

And with thanking Charles the three are greatly enjoying chatting away on the subtleties of the story, and happily making links between it and the sighting *Laughter* and the ghost stories of the teatime.

Charles is rising from his chair and returning slowly into the world invisible via the window wall with smiling and waving to Risteárd and Receptive as he goes. They are waving and smiling in return.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (with a very happy smile) Shall we call this loveliest of nights a night, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling happily) Sunday's bells will soon be softly ringing in the pebbles of the holy streams.

Rísteárd (smiling) The nights are many in number, and as many again in number are the stories needing to be told. If you are in no particular rush to leave the inn, then you are very welcome to sit yourself down there again tomorrow night, in that very same chair, where you may happily listen to whatever sighting the fire will bring to my eyes. And it would be my anticipation, Receptive that we would be following it with some very fine discourse as we did this night.

Receptive Thank you, *Rísteárd*. It's very good to be here.

Rísteárd You're most welcome, Receptive.

You go ahead now to your bed.

Take the candle from the table with you.

I will rake the fire.

Receptive Good night so, *Rísteárd*, and thanks again.

Rísteárd Have a sound sleep, Receptive.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

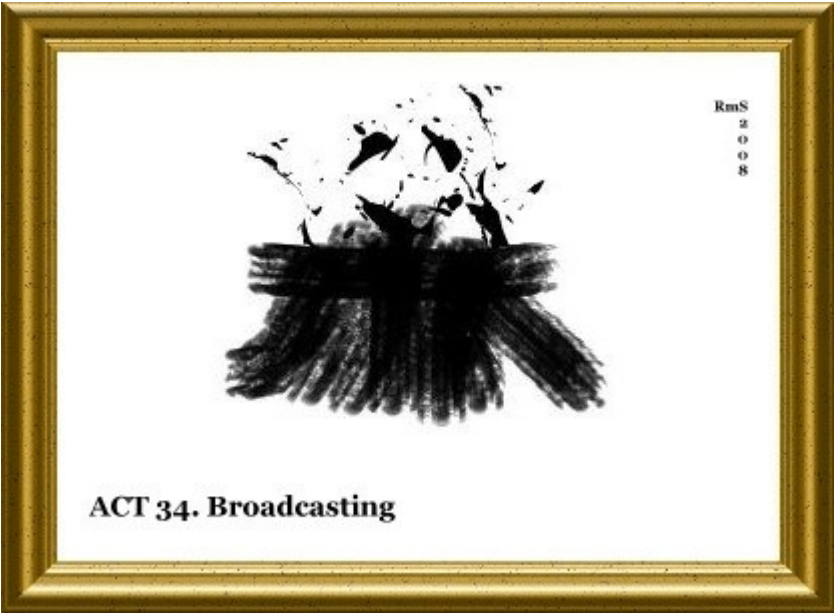
Rísteárd *Exeunt*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Laughter*

Sunday Eve the 14th December 2002

Annotations:

a story of laughter and wisdom ... - a metaform of Charles Dickens' novel,
A Christmas Carol



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 34. *Broadcasting*

Prologue:

From aurora Rísteárd had spent the day in the hills reflecting on the year past; decades past, centuries, millennia, aeons ad infinitum, and from therein at a Where by rounding did take to pondering on the year becoming; decades becoming, centuries, millennia, aeons ad infinitum, and from therein at a Where by vacating did find himself at the eve of this night.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Rísteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him is his guest, Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Rísteárd Ah, this pleasing fire, Receptive revives to my eyes the sighting of *Broadcasting*.

Receptive How does it proceed, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and

In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Rísteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?
I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Rísteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations
iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another
world)

A radio station broadcasting.

!! ##DDTC##DDTC##DDTC##DDTC##DDTC## !!

This is DDTC welcoming you to our summer schedule. We will be broadcasting the same lessons every evening throughout the summer months from Nineteen Hundred Hours to Twenty-three Hundred Hours with a repeat broadcast of same from Zero Five Hundred Hours to Zero Nine Hundred Hours daily.

Lesson One A

#[-OUR FIRST PARENTS & THE MOLDEN RULE -]#

Good evening.

I am Cagetechnist Muzzle the Opposites.

Our first parents were Canis Pater and Canis Mater.

They are devices of the Cosmos.

Canis Pater Major is the invisible controller of all the constellations in the Northern hemisphere and Canis Mater Minor is the invisible controlleress of all the constellations in the Southern hemisphere.

On our IGNITION DAY, Canis Pater Major and Canis Mater Minor decided to produce our planet and all its inhabitants. They carefully divided the planet into a top and a

bottom, a high and a low, a north and a south, and an east and a west. Our first parents bestowed upon their firstborn

THE MOLDEN RULE

In the intervening millennia this rule has been refined and expanded to cover all aspects of our lives, right down to the smallest detail. Through the convenience and cooperation of our ultraultra modern computers at the Ministry, we have been able to store them safely and add to them for all future generations. This century alone has seen the greatest refinement and expansion of this lockin rule. All in all, there are to date almost as many rules stored as there are stars both in the Northern and Southern hemispheres put together.

A marbellous achievement.

Each generation is encouraged to add to the work for a more comfortable life for our successors. The progression towards greater comfort for all of us in the goal.

[[[##THE MOLDEN RULE##]]]

THE MOLDEN RULE AS BESTOWED UPON OUR ANCESTORS
BY CANIS PATER AND CANIS MATER

#A# IS ALWAYS #A# AND #B# IS ALWAYS #B#
#A# CAN NEVER EVER BE #B#
NOR NEITHER CAN
#B# BE EVER EVER #A#

Issued by the Ministry of Tangible Mechanics & Accept the Fact.
Under the supervision of Minister Manaclme Maniculus.

This is the foundation on which you ought to be thinking, behaving, and working if you want to live a comfortable life.

Better to print on your walls, on your shoes, on your clothes, on your modes of transport, on your footballs; on everywhere. Go to bed with it on your mind, and rise with it on your mind. And let there be no time throughout your day when you don't think of it.

End of Lesson One A

Democratic Dogma Tele-Communications
brings you the Facts about the Fact

Lesson One B

#[-SQUARE - ANGLE BRACKETING-]#

Good evening.

I am Cagetechnist Accept the Matteroffact.

When we ...

Haybeesea who has been listening to the broadcast exclaims to his parents:

'Enough! Long summer evenings are to be outjoyed. I'm going out to the field to play kicking the ball high into the air with Beehaysea.'

'Don't stay out too late now, Haybeesea. Your father and I will be attending to the flower garden.'

'Okay.

Come on, Trieve!

Haybeesea kicks the multicoloured ball high into the fragrance of summer.

'Can you see any writing on it, Beehaysea? Can you make out the colours?'

'Are you daft or something, Haybeesea? Can't you see it's spinning!'

'I guess Cagetechnist Muzzle the Opposites meant that we should read it when the ball is still in our hands, on the ground or under the bed.'

'Who? A ball that's still is a dead ball, Haybeesea.'

'Hahahohoha.'

'Go on, you kick it.

I wonder who kicks the Sun and Moon around the place?'

'Fetch it, Trieve!

Somebody with very big feet and good banana shooting skills, that's who.'

'Needs two dogs with two huge mouths to fetch them for him every morning and, evening.'

'Hahahohoha.'

'Who knows, maybe he's a she.'

'HHAahhaahhoohhoohaha.'

'Or maybe a bird is an airplane with oiled wings who wears football boots.'

'Stop! My sides. Kick kick kick the baaaaalllll.'

'Let it kick itself.'

'HHaahhaahhoohhoohhaahhaahhoohhoohaahaa.'

Parents in the golden flower garden.

'Sounds like Haybeesea, Beehaysea and Trieve are having the time of their lives.'

'Nothing can keep them from enjoying long summer evenings or any evenings.'

'Sure, aren't we the same ourselves?'

'We are, we are indeed.'

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Broadcasting*
~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive It bothers me greatly, Rísteárd that this DDTC type of mentality with its plethora of 'lockin rules' is rapidly becoming the hallmark of the so-called "advanced nations " of the world including my own; the trademark of many major international bodies and institutions.

These days, Risteárd I am so upset by certain astonishing things that are taking place in my own country such as the signing into law of the 'Homeland Security Act (HAS)' and the launching of a program called, 'Total Information Awareness' (TIA).

Risteárd What powers, Receptive has the TIA program?

Receptive It allows my government to electronically spy on one's email and personal data, and by extension and expansion one's tax records, driver's license applications, travel records, telephone records, credit-card records, shopping-mall-security camera videotapes, and even medical records. In a word, Risteárd everything about a person.

Risteárd But doesn't your government's Justice Department, Receptive already authorize the tapping of people's telephones?

Receptive That's what makes it all the more astonishing, Risteárd. This latest move amounts to a definite infringement on civil liberties.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive I'm also very concerned and worried, Rísteárd about the Information Awareness Office's keen interest in developing "example technologies" such as "entity extraction from natural language text", "biologically inspired algorithms for agent control" and "truth maintenance".

Rísteárd Ah, let's have a fine cup of tea shall we or perhaps Receptive would prefer instead a fine cup of coffee?

Receptive (smiling) A cup of tea will be excellent, Rísteárd.

Rísteárd (smiling) A cup of tea with some freshly baked Blueberry Pies.

Receptive (smiling) That would be wonderful, Rísteárd!

Aoife has joined them for the tea, and is delighting in telling Receptive a very interesting story once told to her by her mother concerning a crescent Sun.

Receptive (smiling) Now that we are in the very depths of winter, the words 'into the fragrance of summer' Rísteárd bring up such nice feelings and images for me. How I am impatient for those lovely days to come to New England.

Rísteárd (smiling) Those lovely days are coming, Receptive.

Receptive (smiling) I hope so.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive Rísteárd how should we bring up our children?

Rísteárd (smiling) How is A'isha and Receptive doing so?

Receptive (smiling) We consider our children to be the bounties of our faith; the fragrances of our seasons, Rísteárd. We have prescribed for them the very finest of names resembling those of the ancient Prophets (Peace Be Upon Them).

When they learned to speak, we taught them first of all to recite the beautiful words "La ilaha illallah" and then with all other words did we proceed from there. We never frighten our children for fright instilled in their senses in their early years would only overshadow them for their whole life.

We hug our children often; play with them in their games; pat them affectionately on their heads and shoulders; always letting them hold our hands whether we are walking or sitting, and remembering always to kiss them goodnight with soft words for their dreams. And each morning we greet them with joyful and wise words from *Al-Qur'an Al-Kareem*.

We teach them how to pray and the observance of prayer. We culture ourselves never to shout at our children or to be reproaching or rebuking them on every little trifling matter.

We promote by example truthfulness and loyalty in them as did our parents in us, and their parents in them extending all the way back to the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be Upon Him).

Risteárd (smiling) Beautiful is yere way, Receptive.

Receptive (smiling) Grace and Blessings it is, Risteárd.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) In your own words, Receptive what does the enigmatic Arabic expression "La ilaha illallah" mean?

Receptive (smiling) In this the most important expression of all, Risteárd is contained my faith, 'There is no untruth (god/deity), save Truth (Allah).

Allah is the all encompassing, all pervasive Reality; Indivisible and Self-Subsisting. With 'La ilaha' we move away

onwards from distractions, and with 'Illallah' we recall our Reality. With 'La ilaha' we move away onwards from multiplicity, and with 'Illallah' we recall 'Unity in Diversity'.

All that is not Allah must be burned in the Hearth of Love for Allah who alone Exists. This love, Risteárd is nurtured by the five pillars of Islam namely Faith, Prayer, Charity, Fasting and Pilgrimage.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) A seeker of depths of height am I
Receptive.

Receptive (smiling) Then well might we be with bringing this night to a close, for mine is but a simple understanding of my faith Risteárd, and I am a little anxious that I may be without sufficient knowledge and ability to be able to explain to you its profounder meanings.

Risteárd (smiling) Yere way of bringing up yere children,
Receptive is truly beautiful and profound.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, Risteárd, however it has not been all smooth sailing, especially now that they are teenagers

and living within the present uneasy mood of my country. My country I love dearly, but it's becoming harder and harder to live there in accordance with my faith.

My forebears arrived in New England in the springtime of 1881 having travelled, Risteárd all the way from sacred Karbala of the Euphrates; A'isha's in the summertime of 1704 all the way from Shiraz, the "City of roses and poets".

Risteárd (smiling) Certainly, Receptive among one of the most beautiful place appellations in the world: the City of Roses and Poets.

Receptive (smiling) And certainly so too true, Risteárd of the beautiful appellation: the Isle of Saints and Scholars.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) Why do you refer to yere children, Receptive as 'teenagers'? After being teenagers will ye be referring to them as 'twentyagers', 'thirtyagers', 'fortyagers', 'fiftyagers', 'sixty ... ?

Receptive (smiling) I guess, I have unknown to myself, Risteárd fallen somewhat into the trap of compartmentalizing

their lives into certain years, thus depriving them of being themselves without such restraints.

Risteárd (smiling) Our children and we are always children, Receptive and hence every aspect of their lives and our lives must be allowed to reflect this one very important reality.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling tearfully and with great integrity of heart) *Risteárd* have you ever considered becoming a Muslim? Allah I believe don't need that you go to Jahannam, to Hell; Allah needs for you to accept "La ilaha illallah" that you may begin along the path leading to securing entry into Jannah, the Heavenly Garden, and once therein to reach and dwell in the firdaws, the highest level of the heavenly gardens.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) In all places, Receptive where truths have been recorded, truths have sought out my consideration, and with welcoming them have I been greatly blessed.

Receptive (smiling) Has not *the* TRUTH been recorded here
this very night, Risteárd, and in the sacred words, "La ilaha
illallah" has IT not been seeking out your consideration?

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling most beautifully and with joyful tears) By
Mysterymystery was I sacredly vesseled forth into this world
from everlasting to live joyfully, wisely, and profoundly.

By Mysterymystery my life in and of the places before
coming into this existence; my life here in and of this place,
and my life in and of all the other places will without end be by
Mysterymystery.

By Mysterymystery am I established; without having a
beginning or an ending am I.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd In a world where the secular is spoken of as being
the most sacred, and the once most sacred been viewed as
highly secular, I require, Receptive much more from myself.

Receptive (smiling) Revert to Islam and the 'much more' you will have found Risteárd.

Risteárd (smiling) The rivers of the isle run free seasonally divertingly meanderingly Aoife our children and me. And wherever, Receptive the swan and the heron seek them they and we are found. Every bank is hallowed ground from where perennially the much more for us is truly to be found.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) The nights are many in number, and as many again in number are the stories needing to be told. If you are in no particular rush to leave the inn, then you are very welcome to sit yourself down there again tomorrow night, in that very same chair, where you may happily listen to whatever sighting the fire will bring to my eyes. And it would be my anticipation, Receptive that we would be following it with some very fine discourse as we did this night.

Receptive Thank you, Risteárd. It's very good to be here.

Risteárd You're most welcome, Receptive.
You go ahead now to your bed.
Take the candle from the table with you.

I will rake the fire.

Receptive Good night so, Risteárd, and thanks again.

Risteárd Have a sound sleep, Receptive.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Risteárd *Exeunt*

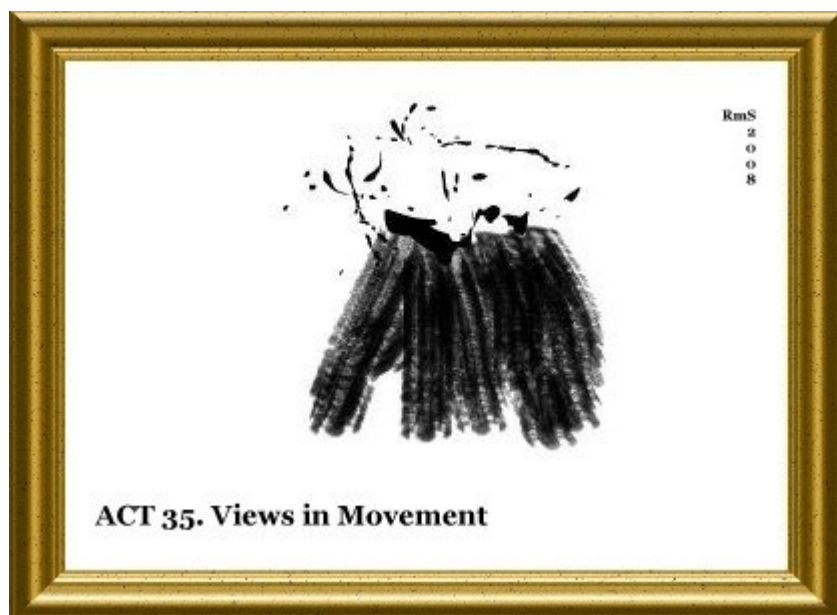
Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Broadcasting*
Sunday Eve the 28th December 2002

Annotations:

New England - With reference to New England in the United States of America. It consists of six states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

Karbala of the Euphrates - With reference to the holy city of Karbala in Al-Jumhuriyah al-`Iraqiyah.

Shiraz - With reference to the beautiful city of Shiraz in Jomhuri-ye Eslami Iran.



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 35. *Views in Movement*

Prologue:

Afternoon of this felicitous day it is, and Risteárd is over the valley from the inn, strolling by the olive tree wall of Caisleán an Ridire Rósréalta.

Softly reaching his sacred sanctuary from wheres know where are rejoicing words.

Hark the Herald of Lady Ave Éire!

Behold, a chuisle mo croí.

My Misty Night Canticles of thy Sacred Sanctuary, in regions thirsty of the world garden, therein are becoming its refreshing streamlets.

Streamlets will become riverets; riverets rivers and rivers to sea will become thee.

Risteárd with great humility and respect is joyfully making reply.

Behold the innkeeper of Lady Ave Éire; the words that Thou have spoken unto me, these have I spoken unto the world, and the words that Thou shall yet speak unto me, these too I shall speak unto the world.

The right wing of Earth is already rising above the Sun as Risteárd is strolling in happy ponderation o'er the valley to the inn. Spontaneously is his sacred sanctuary exclaiming with great joy!

Oh, my!
What's this?
What's this?
Snow is visiting the hill country!

Is álainn an radharc é!
Calóga boga bána!
Wonderfilling!
Wonderfilling!
Wonderfilling with a myrid fleurs-de-lys!
Sé do bheatha, m'Bhean Uasal Éire.

Sun slowly going out of sight.
Soft gentle tears in familiar flow.
Halfmoon in southeast high
Brightening through the falling snow.

Lo!
Serene smiles there they go.
Hark!
Yonder Caisleán an Ridire Rósréalta
Snowdowned to the nines.
Codladh sámh agaibh.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Rísteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him is his guest, Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters
to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over
on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Rísteárd Ah, this pleasing fire, Receptive revives to my eyes
the sighting of *Views in Movement*.

Receptive How does it proceed, *Rísteárd*?

Rísteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Rísteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?

I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the very beginning.

Rísteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another world)

Chaubran in his study, looking out the window at a blue sky. Tele-experience.

'Chaubran, I'm overhere!'

'Where?'

'Overhere. The view of that which you call the Milky Way galaxy is lightful from outhere isn't it? Can you find the solar system which contains the planet you call Earth?'

'I can see so many different varieties of solar systems! How can I possibly know which one contains planet Earth?'

'Let's move farther away. Can you find the Milky Way galaxy?'

'I can see so many different spiral galaxies! How can I possibly know which one is the Milky Way galaxy?'

'Let's move farther away. Where's up? Where's down?'

Where's a center? What season is it? Do you have any idea where you are?'

'None whatsoever. I'm lost. Lost in space.'

'In any direction what can you see?'

'I can see so many different light places. Some places are brighter than others while others again are very dim. Some are near. Some are far. Places. Places. Places.'

'Yes, all are places. What else can you see?'

'There's no particular order. A spectacular maze of confusion. It would be very hard to say which places come first or second in our linear time continuum.'

'Why do you wish to knit them together in such a manner?'

'Back on planet Earth we talk that way. Time is an important entity for us. It helps us to impose some sort of order on to Reality. An invaluable means of concretizing every situation.'

'Outhere there are only places and places. Time has no function and no meaning.'

'But what of history? History is so important.'

'What you refer to as an historical event is none other than a high story comparable to a piece of high ground. A place which is visible from a distance like any of the places which you can see around you from outhere.'

'And what of the places which you can't see?'

'You love to draw lines between all the high places of your choice, thereby convincing yourself that one place comes

before another while another comes after in your linear time continuum.

Take for example, Gatimeus Julius Seesar's invasion of the Celton Isle. That is not a time event although you have convinced yourself that it is. It's merely a piece of high ground.

Let's say that that elliptical galaxy overthere represents Seesar's invasion event and that all the other visible galaxies represent all other events high and low which have ever taken place on planet Earth. Why would you want to or even attempt to introduce something as meaningless as a linear time continuum?'

'So that Reality may be provided with some sort of coherent meaning. By doing so I can say for certain that Seesar's invasion happened before I was born. That would then be a fact and from there I could move on to concretise more facts.'

'That's just a great deception, Chaubran. That your birth was a place-happening is a fact. That the invasion was a place-happening is a fact. Place-happenings among numerous place-happenings.

Look overthere again at the Seesar galaxy, and tell me if you can see any point to saying that it has been in existence before that other galaxy overthere or vice versa or that you

existed before or after both of them or all the other countless places stretching in every direction.

Why do you make the simple so complex for yourself?
Why not just work with what is in its own state?

That is the only true way to profoundly experience places.'

'I'm all confused! I don't know what's best anymore.'

'It's not that you don't know, Chaubran, but rather you're finding it difficult to think outside the intellectual framework you have enclosed yourself in. If you were to abandon such a framework you would have no problem in accepting that all happenings are merely places. Outthere, Chaubran, you are as a planet, star or galaxy is. Let yourself be aware of it.'

'I don't feel myself to be moving.'

'Believe me, you are. To be a place, naturally implies movement. Outthere is not a here. The place you are moving to is not overthere or neither is the place from which you moved away from an overthere. Movement with a difference.'

'Why is it that although you deny both the existence and usefulness of our Time concept, do you use so many Time related expressions yourself?'

'Merely to facilitate your lack of understanding, Chaubran. How else can I even hope to explain to you the Greater Picture unless by first bridging?'

'Accept me in my natural state!'

'That's what I'm trying to relate to but you're blocking me.'

There is a silence.

'I would very much like to know how we can record even the high stories of our experiences on planet Earth unless we utilize our Time concept? Without such a method all events would become entangled in each other and, ultimately lost; lost for all eternity.

Our identity; our ethos remains reasonably intact by means of keeping accurate records of our most important events. These records are a type of life-support system.'

'There is no need, Chaubran to record that which is right in front of activating sanctuaries.'

'Your words make little or no sense. If we were to go out there somewhere to planet Earth we would find no place which we could point to and say there is Seesar invading Celton. Such a place does not exist any more. All that remains of the event are our historical records safely stored in our books and microchips.'

'That's very true as far as that type of pitiful truth goes. Come, let me introduce you to indefinable truth.'

Back on planet Earth.

'Chaubran, look overthere for a Roman legion led by Seesar.'

'What kind of humour is this? I can only see the sea and the seashore.'

'Stop dazzling your sanctuary with your eyes. Let your sanctuary activate through your eyes.'

'How can I do that?'

'Let your sanctuary look, and be live the place for you by letting it work together with the place itself. Let them happen it for you.'

'I can't believe it but it looks like there is actually a Roman legion standing fully alive on the shore.'

'There is, and who do you think that might be standing on that rock?'

'Surely not Gatimeus Julius Seesar?'

'In living colour, and about to invade the Celton Isle. Why don't you go over to him and tell him about your century as you call it?'

'Language barrier. And anyway it's most likely he would reject what I have to say to him as being distorted fantasy. Perhaps he'd think I was crazy!'

'Most likely. The human sanctuary has total access to all places not alone outhere on planet Earth but anywhere farandnear. It is because everything happens in places that this is possible. If you say everything happens in Time then you have blocked yourself off from access to a place event.

Even though you build a time machine it can't move as Time has no physical structure.'

'You mean my sanctuary can know what happened in a particular place?'

'Human language! Happened is not the best way of expressing it. The sacred sanctuary stands out in space like we did, and can see all places as they are in their own states.'

'Amazing!'

'Chaubran, the Universe as you call it delights in veiling and unveiling itself. We've got to learn how to use our connate power if we really want to experience what's taking place around us. The Universe and we are all taking place together.'

'Is the Universe one enormous place then?'

'Rather places. Chaubran, discover who you really are and live accordingly. Use your sacred sanctuary place that we may share our mutual inner standings of places with each other, and with the countless other lifeforms who inhabit many of those places.'

'I can't seem to get the notion of Time out of my head. It rules my mind completely.'

'Why not rather try taking your head out of the pit of Time which you have dug with your own hands?'

'Is it possible?'

'Possible it is.'

Chaubran returns from his tele-experience dumbfounded. He leaves the room and goes out across the

fields to think deeply about himself, and his fellow human beings, and all.

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Views in Movement* ~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) Is Heaven, Rísteárd the Greater Picture?

Rísteárd (smiling) That which is referred to as "Heaven" and much spoken of in many different ways by peoples from all over the world, and discussed in great depth in their ancient texts is, Receptive, but a bridge.

Receptive (smiling) If Heaven is but a bridge, Rísteárd what then is the Greater Picture?

Rísteárd (smiling) Only by passing over one's heavens, Receptive can this be discovered.

Receptive (smiling) Is it a place, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) There are only places and places, Receptive.

Receptive I've been taught, Risteárd that Heaven is my final destination.

Risteárd (smiling) On your journeys, Receptive has ever a bridge been your final destination?

Receptive (smiling) Oh, I've often paused awhile on bridges to gaze at the surrounding beauty of land, water and sky. And I have seen my own reflection from there too in the waters, Risteárd.

Risteárd (laughing) And the waters too from the land must have seen Receptive beneath the bridge there in the lovely sky.

Receptive (laughing) Yes, indeed. Never thought of it like that before, Risteárd.

Risteárd (smiling) Concerning Heaven, Receptive with what words have you been taught?

Receptive (smiling) I've been taught, Risteárd that "Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfilment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness."

Risteárd (smiling) On your journeys, Receptive has ever a bridge been an ultimate end and fulfilment of your longings, the state of your happiness?

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) I've always found it exceedingly difficult, Risteárd to think outside the intellectual framework that I have down through the years been enclosing myself in.

Risteárd (smiling) What of the remaining five frameworks, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) How do you mean, Risteárd?

Risteárd Those of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin? Have you found it difficult too, Receptive to see outside the seeable framework, to hear outside the hearable, to scent outside the scentable, to taste outside the tastable, and to feel outside the feelable?

Receptive I guess so, Risteárd. Self-enclosure has been a way of life for me for as long as I can remember.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) How can I break free of this captivity, Risteárd?

Risteárd (smiling) Unlock the doors, Receptive from the inside.

Receptive How can I unlock them, Risteárd when I don't even know where the locks are located on them or what for that matter they might even look like?

Risteárd (smiling) Look with your sacred sanctuary and you will find them. Listen and you will hear them. Scent and you will scent them. Taste and you will taste them. Feel and you will feel them. Think with your sacred sanctuary and you will know them.

Receptive (smiling) With finding them, Risteárd how will I be able to unlock them?

Risteárd (smiling) Remember how you bolted them, Receptive in the first place, and from there you will find the way.

Receptive (smiling) I can't remember exactly how I did or when I locked them, Risteárd, but I know I did begin to lock them way back when, and have been doing so ever since.

Rísteárd (jokingly) Is it so, Receptive that one who is an outstanding navigator is without clear memories of such vital matters pertaining to self?

Receptive (smiling) It seems that you are a witness to such a phenomenon here this night, *Rísteárd*.

Moments of reflective silence.

Rísteárd (smiling) Seek the help of your sacred sanctuary, Receptive. Let your six senses be as six wise nobles that come to visit your sacred sanctuary to be freed of captivities.

Receptive (smiling) Your words *Rísteárd* are their guiding constellation.

Rísteárd (smiling) When they will lay their gaze again upon your sacred sanctuary Receptive they will be as you found them in the dawn of your memory, and you will rejoice with them and your sacred sanctuary with exceeding great joy.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, *Rísteárd*. I shall look forward to their arrival; letting them enjoy fully their sojourn, and making quite sure to let them return by a different route to their happy stations than I did on the first occasion.

Risteárd (smiling) Wonderful, Receptive. What would you say to a nice cup of tea with New Year's cake, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) I would say, that would be fantastic, *Risteárd*.

Risteárd (smiling) May their taking bestow upon you, Receptive a cornucopia of blessings for the New Year.

Receptive (smiling very happily) Many happy returns, *Risteárd*.

Tea and New Year's cake is being enjoyed in the company of Aoife. Receptive is complimenting Aoife on her baking of such a wonderfully rich cake. *Risteárd*'s smiling eyes are, and have been doing so ever since she walked into the room.

Receptive (smiling) I like the idea, *Risteárd* that the Universe and we are all taking place together.

Risteárd (smiling) Taking place together is the most profound consideration of movement, Receptive.

Receptive (smiling) How should I image; how should I picture movement, *Risteárd*?

Risteárd (smiling) Movement you may image Receptive as you would colour. Movement advances and retreats corresponding

to processes of assimilation, activity and intensity;
dissimilation, passivity and debilitation.

Receptive What colour, Risteárd may be said to correspond to the process of assimilation?

Risteárd (smiling) Let this be an answer that merely touches on the tints of colours for with colours in the natural there are no borders.

Receptive (smiling) Yet, if you were to choose one colour, Risteárd what colour would you begin with to describe movement that advances?

Risteárd I would begin perhaps with the colour white.

Receptive (smiling) If you were to choose one colour, Risteárd what colour would you begin with to describe movement that retreats?

Risteárd I would begin perhaps with the colour black.

Receptive (smiling) Is there any intermediate or transitional colour, Risteárd between the movement which advances and the movement which retreats?

Risteárd (smiling) I will say the colour green. This is movement that appears to be stillness.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive Risteárd can we speak of movements or is there just movement?

Risteárd Movements of movement. Movement may be spoken of as movements of movement. Each and every movement has an inherent characteristic colour of its own.

Such are the flight movements of the swan, heron, crow, magpie, pigeon, blackbird, thrush, robin and wren. Such are the descending movements of the mist, rain, sleet and snow. Such are the flowing movements of the streams, rivers and the waves of the sea. Such are the walking movements of our humankind.

Receptive What is the relationship, Risteárd between a movement and its mover?

Risteárd (smiling) The relationship, Receptive is one of harmonious forgetfulness.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) Risteárd when it comes to architecture
what of movement can we say?

Risteárd (smiling very happily) Wonderful! Now things are
getting really interesting, *Receptive*. Architecture is movement
in correspondences between patterns of structures.

Receptive What would you consider, Risteárd to be the most
profound and perhaps fundamental architectural movement?

Risteárd (smiling) Dew upon the grass.

Receptive (smiling) And after that?

Risteárd (smiling) Grass upon the hillside.

Receptive (smiling) Anything else?

Risteárd (smiling) Hillside upon the land. These, *Receptive*
are architectural movements in correspondences between
patterns of structures.

Receptive What of a cave, Risteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) Where is the most likely place for a cave to be found, Receptive?

Receptive (laughing) Inside a mountain movement upon a land movement.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive What of the architectural movement of our humankind, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) It's the movement of water, Receptive that neither rests by day nor slumbers by night. It is in full correspondence with our fellow lifeforms, with the land, with the rivers, lakes, and sea, with the air, with the moon, planets, sun, and suns, galaxy, and galaxies, with the beyond, with the beyond without end.

Receptive (smiling very happily) I love the movement of waves, Rísteárd. I love their ascending and descending. They are surely movement as colour and even as acoustic. Movement advancing and retreating corresponding to a process of assimilation, activity and intensity; corresponding to a process of dissimulation, passivity and debilitation. Ascending we are with the New Year wave, Rísteárd!

Rísteárd (smiling) The Universe and we are all taking place together, Receptive.

Receptive (smiling brightly) Yes! Yes, indeed. Most profoundly, Rísteárd.

Rísteárd (smiling) With such wonderful insights, shall we be calling it a night, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) I suppose it's better, Rísteárd.
Rest being important too.

Rísteárd (smiling) The nights are many in number, and as many again in number are the stories needing to be told. If you are in no particular rush to leave the inn, then you are very welcome to sit yourself down there again tomorrow night, in that very same chair, where you may happily listen to whatever sighting the fire will bring to my eyes. And it would be my anticipation, Receptive that we would be following it with some very fine discourse as we did this night.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, Rísteárd.
It's very good to be here; I mean to be outhere.

Rísteárd You're most welcome, Receptive.
You go ahead now to your bed.
Take the candle from the table with you.

I will rake the fire.

Receptive Good night so, Risteárd, and thanks again.

Risteárd Have a sound sleep, Receptive.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Risteárd *Exeunt to stroll in the moonlit snow with Aoife*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Views in Movement*

Sunday Eve the 11th January 2003

Annotations:

A chuisle mo croí. - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'Beloved of my heart.'

Is álainn an radharc é! - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'A beautiful sight it is!'

Calóga boga bána! - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'flakes', 'soft' and 'white': soft white snowflakes

Sé do bheatha, m'Bhean Uasal Éire - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'Hail, (my) Lady Éire.' namely Lady Ave Éire

Codladh sámh agaibh - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'Sound sleep to ye.'

A lovely goodnight greeting.



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 36. *Our Essence*

Prologue:

Sun bright and gentle upon the early morning horizon. Sky of blue hosting clouds of after storm; light they be and translucent. Rísteárd in bountiful contentment strolling.

Beautiful is the hill country of Déisi Mumhan.

All being tinted golden.

Robin red breast singing in an elm; magpie on top a pine.

Oh, wondrous spontaneity!

White lilies in full bloom by the marge of a hawthorn grove.

Lilies with winter clime still in passing!

White lilies all a carmel golden going.

Carmel lilies misty green bestowing.

Glandhuan in slight flood glory, winding upon the golden way.

Every myriad in waiting motion.

Peace therein immaculate.

Sacred endowment, flourishing our true humanae vitae bliss.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Rísteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him is his guest, Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Risteárd Ah, this pleasing fire, Receptive revives to my eyes
the sighting of *Our Essence*.

Receptive How does it proceed, *Risteárd*?

Risteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Risteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?

I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the very beginning.

Risteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another world)

A man in his mid-thirties, dressed in ragged colourful clothes, and wearing no headgear is riding along leisurely in a railless donkey cart. The white coloured donkey wares no reins, halter or bit save a well cushioned saddle and soft padded harness with which to pull the cart. Also in the cart sits a gold-haired dog, collarless and leashless with its two front paws resting on a bundle of notebooks. The bundle is bound with a string made of dried grass. The devoted donkey gracefully pulls the cart up alongside the guard post at a side entrance to the huge grey coloured Ultra Modem Scientific Research Centre at Ignore (UMSRCI).

'Hello, John?'

'Hello Avis? How's Mildlea and Calmea?'

'We're all doing well. And yourself, John?'

'Can't complain, Avis. Happy to have a job. Your leg seems to have improved a lot since I last saw you.'

'Next time round, John it will be as good as new again, and Mildlea won't need to be pulling this cart for my comfort. Here's some wild honey for Teresa and the children.'

'They'll be thrilled, Avis. Thanks a million.'

'Ye're very welcome, John.'

'Mildlea and Calmea you come with me around here to the back of the guard post, and I'll take good care of you as usual while Avis is dropping in the notebooks. I know how you like to keep a low profile, Avis.'

'Thanks John. You're a good friend to us. I won't be long.'

Outer secretary's office.

'Ahha, Mestr. Hayvis Through. Hyoo ahgain. Hyes, of hcourse. I'll seehe to it personhally that hyoor hotebooks will be hiven to the propher heople as husual who will no houbt hive them their hundivided professionalknowhulal hattention as husual. Hoodday.'

After sharing a simple meal with his friend John, the three leave for the long return journey back to the hills.

'Mildlea and Calmea, it's an exciting feeling for me to be taking our findings to the astronomers at UMSRCI knowing that someday perhaps they'll be read and taken seriously. Yet,

I find it even more exciting to be on the way back out again in search of new discoveries.'

And Calmea replies, saying,
'I like both equally well.'

And Mildlea replies, saying,

'I like being in the hills most of all. We've more friends there.'

On the way they come upon a man at a crossroads, dressed in an ashes coloured suit, who appears to be having some car trouble.

'Hello? Can we be of any help?'

'We as in the royal we? What could a donkey cart rider possibly know about a super turbo state-of-the-art piece of machinery like this here baby?'

Mildlea gently starts off walking.

'Hold on! Hold on. I'm sorry. It's just that I've been stranded here for the last four minutes. I've deadlines to meet and the hdamn car phone, fax and onboard computer have all shut themselves down.'

'If you like we can take you to Unabridged bus stop.'

'Where? How long will that take? I'm new to this myGodforsaken hdtregs of a place.'

'Unless herself decides to take a rest or two along the way, I'd say it should take us no more than an hour and a half.'

'What? My myGod! That's a life time for me!'

Mildlea starts moving off slowly.

'Hold on! Okay, I'll go with you. Beats walking, I suppose. Just let me get my briefcase and lock my car.'

Along the way.

'Oh, hconfounded! Can't you make this dumb animal go any faster? Kick it or hit it or ...! Do something to make it accelerate!'

'If you don't like me pulling this cart at my own pace, please feel free to walk at your own pace.'

'Listen you dumb animal, don't talk to me like that. Haven't you any control over it, donkeyman?'

'Don't need to. Where are you headed for anyway?'

'I've got to attend a seminar in Indifference. It starts this afternoon and runs for four days. You see I'm a famous futurologist. I don't suppose it really matters to you, but I'm actually a very important person. I have to give the key opening talk at this seminar; the tone-setter. I have been working on it

since this morning. We scholarly intellectual people have to work very hard. We don't have time to be riding around the countryside everyday, free and easy as you like, in a donkey cart, like some people. I bet you don't even have any particular job. Just living away your parasitic existence while the rest of us hosts have to break our hbutts trying to make this a better world for ourselves to live in. You idling lower class really hpiiss me off. Tell me, just out of curiosity what do you do with your life when you are not donkeyhassin' around in the wilderness?'

'I'm an extragalatic galactonomer, wherever.'

'Like hshit you are! How did you ever manage to get your tongue around those two words? A milkatonomer? Oh pardon my ignorance. Ah, what was it again? Oh, yes. I've got it. I got it. Yes, an extragalatic galactonomer - riding around in a donkey cart, out in the middle of nowhere, dressed up like a jolly minstrel right out of the Dark Ages! Give me a break, please.'

'I prefer the word 'Light' myself.'

'You low life are all the same. Always ready with the smart damp squib; the curved ball going into the sod.'

'One month ago we made a wondrous discovery.'

'Tell me about it DonqeyOtheeman. I'm all ears. Yes, all ears, Don Key.'

'We found a lobe galaxy with a span of more than two hundred trillion stars stretching out over a distance of seven billion light years. Its height-depth absolutely enormous. The galaxy is close to the center of a cluster of large galaxies called

Advanced 8092 and it is more than seventy times the size of the Milky Way. The Advanced 8092 cluster is some fifty-five billion light years from Earth, and is itself made up of about three thousand galaxies, each with millions and millions of stars, solar systems and planets.'

'Where did you learn to read so well? Did you have some formal education? Anyway, it makes no difference to me what you say about the OUT THERE because I'm only concerned with this, the greatest planet of all, in this the one and only solar system. In fact the greatest in the entire Universe.

I squint at the Milky Way galaxy, and that's enough for me. There is but this one galaxy, and none besides. Everything else we see out there is merely hundreds of stars which are in fact in themselves all splatters of the Milky Way. Spilt milk splashes far. The higher the farther, they say. These stars merely provide some form of comfort or illusion for the plebs, people like yourself. I on the other hand have no need for them, as I found from my studies that the stars as we call them have nothing to do with us. And as such, we need not have anything to do with them. Live and ignore is my motto. They're just blobs of milk.

I'm concerned about more important things, things that matter, things that can be controlled. How to guide the pauper population to be more frugal. How to transmit intact the thoughts of the great futurologists of former times. They knew

well how to confine their vision to things of importance, namely, the human condition on this planet though they made the mistake of trying to link it to the motions of celestial bodies. Nowadays, we know that the human condition has nothing to do with these blobs but rather that it has everything to do with stocks. From stars to stocks. In carefully studying the daily fluctuation of global economic trends, I can exactly predict the distant future for our descendants. The essence of man is to be found on this planet. And people like myself hold the key to understanding it. Not some dunkeyman like yourself.'

'Our lives have cosmic dimensions far far far beyond the Milk Way galaxy. The essence is to be found outthere and not on one small little planet, in one small little solar system, in one small little galaxy, in one tiny part of the Great Universe. Our essence has and is of cosmic dimensions too.'

'So what? A cat has cosmic dimensions in relation to spilt milk. What really matters is how best we the elite can guide politicians to rule the populace more effectively. So much money is wasted on space exploration. It puts me in a state of high dudgeon!

It's all for what, what for us? Better to stay here on this planet. Culture ourselves and forget about what's out there. We could use that money instead to organize more seminars. As a matter of fact, I seriously think there is nothing out there but blobs of milk on the floor. What's of importance is on the table.

And who do you think spilt the milk in the first place?
Now that it is spilt, is he really interested in it anymore?
Perhaps in fact it offers him a chance to go after something
even more tastier.'

'We've been outthere'

And Mildlea says,

'Well, here's your bus stop.'

And Avis says,

'We'll be heading on up that dirt road there. Hope you'll
do well at your seminar.'

'Waite a minute donkeyman. What did you mean when
you said, We've been outthere?'

'The three of us visited Advanced 8092 several times.'

And Calmea says,

'The bus! I can hear it coming in the distance.'

'Look, if you don't mind, I would like to hear some more
about your extragalactic discoveries as you call them. Might be
something in them I could use.'

'What about the seminar?'

'They'll have to get on somehow without me. Although I
doubt if it will be any great success in my absence. Listen, I'm

sorry if I came across as being somewhat vaguely obnoxious to you back there.'

'Where?'

'Ah, well. Never mind then. I'm Peter Yetee Ph.D Thrice. Please call me Peter.'

'I'm Somebody Else. Please call me Somebody. This is Dumb and that's Deaf.'

The little company take about two and a half hours to reach Avis' place. Yet, to Peter it seemed to have been taking an eternity.

'Well here we are, Peter.'

'But Somebody, there is only a small broken down hut and a large boulder. Where are the huge ultraradio telescopes needed to look far out into space?'

'You're looking at them. When night comes we go up there on the boulder and from there we go and look first at the other planets in this solar system to see how they are getting on. Then we view some other solar systems in this galaxy. And from there we move on to view other galaxies. One night last winter we were looking at a cluster of galaxies which are ninety-nine trillion light years away.'

'Without a telescope?'

'You're looking at them. They're on our shoulders. When I say looking, I mean actually looking at in the outthere.'

Avis then goes on to expound to Peter all the discrepancies in the ancient and modern writings concerning the Universe and the galaxies. As he listens, Peter's mind is on fire with excitement, but he can't keep in his head what he is hearing. It is like sand running within a pyramid.

'Would you like to come with us tonight?'

'Sure. Why not. And how may I ask is this wingless flight to take place?'

'Can you accept it if I say to you that the how is a mystery, and it's by being itself in itself that we can go and come back without any difficulty? If you wish to come with us you must be prepared to let yourself be taken by the how of mystery.'

'To a person like me who expelled mystery, myth, and mud with a vengeance from his life in his early teens, how can I ever hope to accept such a ridiculous offer? Not that I would even bother to try anyway. You must be crazy! And besides, mystery is not something that a scientific person like myself should lower himself to show any interest in at all, whatsoever.'

'You reject more than much Peter, when you reject mystery. Let it come alive again in you. Mystery as it is in itself is a how. When you let it be a how for you, it's powerful.'

'MONEY is the only power. Listen, I need to take a rest. That donkey cart ride has almost killed me.'

Avis, Mildlea and Calmea go to look at a solar system nearer the center of a galaxy. In the hut Peter is sleeping.

Comes aurora and Avis is writing notes.

Awaking is Peter.

'Why do you take notes?'

'I want to let others know the true picture of what's really outthere in the Great Universe.'

'Sure, and I supposed now you'll tell me that the three of you went out into the Great Universe during the night.'

'Yes, as a matter of fact we did. Every three months I take my findings to the Ultra Modern Scientific Research Centre at Ignore so that the astronomers may read them.'

'Ignore? I've never heard of the place.'

'But I found out from a good friend of mine who works at the Centre that all my notes are carefully put into cardboard boxes marked ...

CLASSIFIED HUMOUR!!!

The Ravings of a 21st century Rural Galactonomer '

'And only rightly so! How could they possibly take you seriously?'

'These boxes are stored away. Nobody ever bothers to look at them. At first I was very upset about this situation.

However, I made up my mind to continue taking my notes to the Centre as someday some researcher will take the time to read them and learn something from them.'

'I pity your lack of gogetterness, donkeyman. Fame and fortune are but for the living. When opportunity knocks, rip the hinges off the door, I say.

I think I'll be off now and get a mechanic to repair my car. There're many other seminars I have to participate in.'

'We'll take you to the bus stop.'

'No. No. I'm too sore after yesterday's VIP treatment in the first class seat. I'll walk. Thanks for the large sum of nothing.'

He runs down the road. He has his car repaired.

The mechanic says,

'That'll be four hundred and fifty dings, please.'

'What? Robbery! Here you are. Tell me, have you ever heard of a place called, Ignore? I heard they have some sort of scientific research Centre there.'

'Yes, indeed.'

'How do I get there?'

'Go west until you reach Firstinterested. Turn left for Littlebylittle. Then keep on going straight for Afterawhile. Ignore is not far from Afterawhile.'

The car roars off into the distance.

Eventually, it roars to a screeching halt alongside the guard post at the main entrance to UMSRCI. He is opening down his automatic window, and saying,

'Excuse me. I'm a friend of Somebody Else. He has a donkey called Dumb who can talk, and a dog called Deaf who has a very good sense of hearing, and can also talk. He asked me to pick up some notebooks he had left here at the Centre. You see he wants me to edit and compile them into a book and publish it using my name. You see, ah, I'm famous and well he's not. You get the picture, don't you?'

'Wait a moment, Sir, please. I'll make some inquiries.'

'Hello, Mr.Crank? This is Drawbridges at the main gate. I'm afraid Sir, we've got us a bit of a hackometer problem down here.'

'On my way Drawbridges. Leave it for me. I'll take care of it.'

And Mr.Crank asks,

'Excuse me, Sir, may I see some form of identification, please?'

'Why?'

'Security reasons, Sir. What's the nature of your visit Professor Yetee or is it Professor Thrice?'

'hYetee! Professor hYetee, Yetee. I'm looking for some notebooks left here by Somebody Else.'

'Have you got his or her name, Sir?'

'Mr. Somebody Else.'

'I see, ah. Okay. Well, here's your ID, Sir. I'm sorry, Sir but we have no record of somebody named Somebody Else as having dropped off any notebooks at UMSRCI. Goodbye, Sir!'

'Won't you even check? He rides in a donkey cart. He's an extragalactic galactonomer.'

'A what? Sure. Sure, I'll check for an extragalactic galactonomer riding in a donkey cart. Yes, of course, Sir. Yes, of course. LISTEN !!! If you're not out of my face in ten seconds, Professor Thristed Yetee PuH Da ha, you'll be riding on a leather soled cart !!!

Burning rubber on open road.

'Come on super baby! Take me back to good old Mathtual Factual before these parts and its people cause me to forget who I really am in the world.'

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Our Essence*
~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) Why do some people, Rísteárd maintain a low profile in the world?

Rísteárd (smiling) The reasons are many in number, Receptive but not all of them are worthy of mention. Of those that are, I will speak of three.

There are those who do so to avoid having their ideas being manipulated by the cunningly narrow-minded.

There are those who on behalf of their family; their local community; their country or even the world do so to reflect deeply on the fundamental values that everyone tries in their own way to live by, but for one reason or another can make little or no time to be thinking about them due to their various commitments be they to the family or to the society at large.

Then there are those in seats of power who do so that they may give privately of their time and love to those they deem to be in the greatest need of them.

Receptive (smiling) For which of these three reasons may it be said that Rísteárd maintains such a low profile in the world?

Risteárd (smiling) Receptive, Risteárd Mac Grailt is merely an innkeeper in the hill country of Déisi Mumhan, on this the beautiful isle of Éire; an isle of this marvellous orb; an orb of this cosy Solar system, and a Solar system of this magnificent Galaxy of the Great Beyond.

Receptive (smiling) Your very lifestyle, Risteárd would seem to strongly suggest that by your own intention you are maintaining a very low profile in the world.

Risteárd (smiling) My lifestyle could be described, Receptive as the position of the ocean; oceanstyle whereby the rivers and streams may arrive with ease.

Receptive (smiling) While those three reasons of which you spoke of Risteárd are worthy of focus, is there any one from among them that you would consider to be the worthiest of them all?

Risteárd Though, I could successfully avoid having my ideas manipulated by the cunningly narrow-minded, and yet live not myself according to a high moral code, I am become a shame unto myself, Receptive.

And though, I could manage to reflect deeply on behalf of many on the fundamental values that everybody tries in their

own way to live by, and yet live not myself according to a high moral code, I am a fraud, Receptive.

And again, though, I were to find myself in a seat of power, and at the same time manage to maintain a low profile that I may give privately of my time and love to those who I deem to be in the greatest need of them, and insist not in having a high moral demand upon myself, all my effort, Receptive would profit me nothing whatsoever.

Receptive (smiling) The wondrous flow of your words, Risteárd brings to my mind a certain letter that was written in former times to a particular community living in the old city of Corinth in the land of Greece.

Risteárd (in silent soliloquy) Ah, interesting. It seems that this particular seasoning of bait is again found to be sweet to a taste.

Risteárd (smiling) How does it go, Receptive?

Receptive "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angles, and have not warm-heartedness, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not warm-heartedness, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not warm-heartedness, it profiteth me nothing.

Warm-heartedness suffereth long, and is kind; warm-heartedness envieth not; warm-heartedness vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Warm-heartedness never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a grown-up, I put away all childish things.

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

And now abideth faith, hope, warm-heartedness, these three; but the greatest of these is warm-heartedness."

Rísteárd (smiling) Beautiful are these words and sentiments, Receptive. Still more beautiful must be the lifestyle that accompanies them.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) In the world of our present time, *Rísteárd* is there anyone that you know of who finding themselves in a seat of power, is at the same time managing to maintain a low profile that they may give privately of their time and love to those hwo they deem to be in the greatest need of them, and who demand of themselves the highest moral standards that go with being a sovereign?

Rísteárd (smiling very happily) Yes, I know of one such noble person, Receptive.

She is a loving and caring mother to her children,
a trustworthy and faithful wife to her husband,
a dignified and graceful queen to her people,
and a living embodiment of inner and outer beauty to
the whole world.

She dances happily with traditional values and sings in
inspirational harmony with modernity.
She strolls in Flourishing Gardens of Peace with those of
a kindred spirit.

She is a precious lily of Mesopotamia.
She is a true daughter of Arabia.
She is a fragrance of *Al-Qur'an Al-Kareem*.

She is a spring rain in the desert.
She is sight and vision in the love of wisdom.
She is warm-heartedness.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) Of whom do you so poetically; so
philosophically, and so highly speak of, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) Of one who finding herself in a seat of
power, is at the same time managing to maintain a low profile,
that she may give privately of her time and love to those who
she deems to be in the greatest need of them, and who requires
of herself the highest moral standards that go with being a
Mother Wife Queen.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) A man, Rísteárd is truly blessed with the love of such a wife. A king, truly privileged with the confidence of such a queen. Children of such a mother are happy night and day. And a people with such a Royal Family, follows naturally the ways of virtue.

Rísteárd (smiling) With such a Royal Family the world is becoming more virtuous, children more loving, husbands and wives more faithful, and sovereigns more noble. Clean water in the hillside spring dutifully kept clean, shows itself beautifully in the valleys as a clean flowing stream.

Receptive (smiling) Brimming over with courtly verse you are, Rísteárd.

Rísteárd (smiling) Methinks rather that it must be the listener that transforms the words so!

Receptive and Rísteárd are heartily laughing.

Rísteárd (smiling) What would you say to a nice hot cup of tea, Receptive with some freshly baked scones, butter and honey?

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, Rísteárd that would be lovely. Will you then reveal to me the identity of the "spring rain in the desert" for I'm most anxious to know who she is?

Rísteárd (smiling) I'll leave that privilege to Aoife.

Aoife is joining them for the tea. She is happily providing Receptive with the identity of the "spring rain in the desert".

She is speaking now of Her Majesty's womanly patience, vision and wisdom. Receptive is greatly impressed, and comforted with knowing that there is at least one such noble sovereign reigning in our contemporary world.

Rísteárd is smiling his eyes at Aoife. She is returning the compliment to him in like fashion.

Tea is over.

Receptive The word "pauper" conjures up painful memories for me, Rísteárd. Memories of the place and the time of my birth.

Rísteárd (smiling) Having been born here on the beautiful isle of Éire, Receptive how is it possible for you to have painful memories associated with it?

Receptive (smiling fading away) There is the great beauty of the isle, Rísteárd no doubt. And being a native of the isle is my

greatest pride and joy. My problem, however is with certain shameful social institutions.

Rísteárd Where on the isle, Receptive was your place of birth?

Receptive (with heaviness) I was born within the walls of what was once known as a Union Workhouse, but which by the year of my birth was looked upon as merely being the local hospital. The actual wing itself in which I was born has since been demolished.

Rísteárd In the time of your birth it was but a local hospital, Receptive with a convenient maternity section serving the local community. Why then do you need to be hurting yourself by making any connection with its former shameful role and name?

Receptive (with heaviness) It's not by my wish, *Rísteárd* do I do so nor ever was it mine to make any connection whatsoever, rather its own shameful past made a connection with me.

Rísteárd Why so, Receptive?

Receptive (with heaviness) At the time of my birth, which was early in a summer's night, I was born a healthy child, *Rísteárd* in every way. My limbs were sound and my mind clear.

Then during that night while my Mama slept soundly, there came to my cot slidering down out of the ceiling a frightening old man.

He yelled at me in a rasping voice, saying,

"You're way too handsome a child for this place!"

Then he reached down and picked me up and carried me out through an open window, and over the tops of the buildings down to the burial ground for the diseased. In a flash, all the graves opened wide, and there were hundreds of people rising up out of them. They looked so destitute and so awfully sick. Some were old and not so old, many were young, and the great majority of them were women holding their emaciated babies to their bosoms. Then the old mouldy-eyed man glared at me, and groaned,

"You're way too well formed for our company here!"

And in a moment, he caught my too little feet and bent them there and then all out of shape with his rancid festered hands. I cried and I cried and cried but nobody there wanted to hear.

Next thing I knew, I was waking up in my cot bawling crying.

And with the dawning of my first day, oh, how shocked my Mama was when she discovered that my pretty feet had somehow become bent all out of shape during the night while she in sound sleep had slept quiet.

In the morning when my father, Risteárd came she told him what had happened to me during the night, and they both wept bitterly, one at either side of my cot.

The years; the years passed in a wheelchair bound in a country pound. Then one night when thoughts of ending it all once and for all were pressing most grievously upon my poor broken heart, there appeared to me in a vision one like a golden swan with his wings partiality stretched out like so.

And he did begin to dance, Risteárd. He danced so merrily and so otherworldly that I forgot all thoughts of that which I had been contemplating but a short time before.

From that night forth, Risteárd the Golden Swan visited me in nightly visions for a total of nine months. He would dance and dance and dance. Never a word would he speak save through the sublime soothing notes of a flute which he wondrously played from time to time.

With each visit, I felt something miraculous was happening to my feet. They were slowly but surely returning to

their original shape and filling with fresh soundness. With his final appearance, I was able to dance along with him. But in my great excitement, Rísteárd, didn't I completely forget to thank him for his restoration of my life. And now already two years have gone by since that momentous night.

Moments of reflective silence.

Then on a day of this Christmas Season just passed, I was standing alone, Rísteárd reminiscing in the shadows of the old archway that leads into the hospital of my birth, when to my great surprise there passed there before my eyes, in living colour, the golden dancer of my visions. He was on his way through the archway to bring comforting words to the elderly, and to the young at heart rays of hope.

Rísteárd Did you come out of the shadows to greet him, Receptive?

Receptive I felt that one such as I, Rísteárd who had been born in such a place should not introduce himself to a Child of Carmel.

Rísteárd (smiling) How could you tell, Receptive that he was a Child of Carmel?

Receptive I've no idea, Risteárd. Somehow there in the archway, I came to know it.

Risteárd (smiling very happily) A Child of Carmel, *Receptive* is a balm of the world; bringing healment, soothment and bravement.

Receptive (brightening) Know you, Risteárd perhaps where he dwells that I may go and thank him?

Risteárd (smiling)

Beyond a pretty redbrick lodge of Old Avondhu
Find you there a castle hidden, well out of view.
By avenue may you be allowed to pass through;
Pass through by walled gardens descending in a wide
sweep to a riverbank.
Upon eight grey limestone steps, give your greetings
with respect.
And if the one there provide you with a good grace,
You will find yourself in the genial presence of the
Lord of the Demesne.

Receptive (happily) Truly thank you, Risteárd. The beautiful ambience of your words remind me of those from *Perceval* in which it is written, and I translate:

"Between the wood and riverbed you'll see,
down in the valley wide,
the manor house where I abide."

Rísteárd (smiling) Then you must be sure, Receptive to ask
the right question of the castle's master when you meet him.

Receptive (smiling) What verily is the right question, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) Verily it is, Receptive. But be mindful,
however that when you're brought into his presence, you'll find
him thankfully to be in the very best of health, quite unlike
what Perceval found when brought into the presence of the
poor unfortunate Fisher King.

Finding him,
"... sitting on a bed in a weakened state,
wearing upon his head a mulberry-black sable cap,
and about him a dark silk robe and wrap."

Receptive (smiling) May it be just as you have said, Rísteárd
and for his kindred and friends too the very best of health.

Rísteárd (smiling) It will be so, Receptive.

Receptive (smiling) And may it be so too, Rísteárd for his
descendants.

Rísteárd (smiling) With blessed hope and steadfast trust that it will surely be so. Shall we call it a night, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) Yes, indeed. And with the dawning the new day will I be setting out in search of the Lord of the Demesne, Rísteárd.

Rísteárd (smiling) Journey safely in your noble quest, Receptive. The nights are many in number, and as many again in number are the stories needing to be told. And always remember, Receptive that there is a warm-hearted welcome here for you at the inn, and that you may sit yourself down there again in that very same chair, where you can happily listen to whatever sighting the fire will bring to my eyes. And it would be my anticipation that we would be following it with some very fine discourse as we did this night.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, Rísteárd. It's very good to be here.

Rísteárd You're most welcome, Receptive.
You go ahead now to your bed.
Take the candle from the table with you.
I will rake the fire.

Receptive Good night so, Rísteárd, and thanks again.

Rísteárd Have a sound sleep, Receptive.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Rísteárd *Exeunt to stroll in the starlight with Aoife*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Our Essence*

Sunday Eve the 25th January 2003

Annotations:

humanae vitae - from Latin, meaning 'human life'

million - a thousand thousands: 1,000,000

billion - in the United States of America and France, a thousand millions:
1,000,000,000 in Britain and Germany, a million millions:
1,000,000,000,000

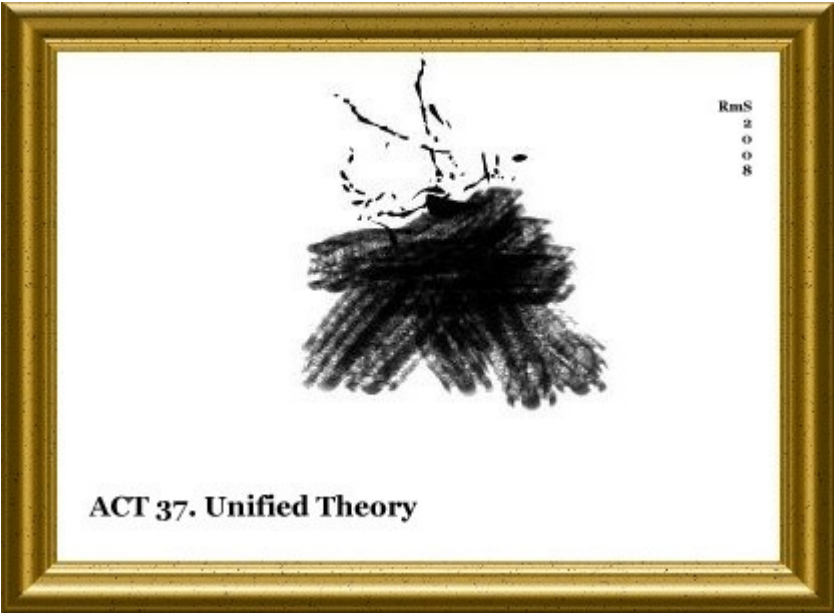
trillion - in the United States of America and France, a thousand billions:
1,000,000,000,000 in Britain and Germany, a million billions:
1,000,000,000,000,000

dudgeon - Someone in high dudgeon is indignantly resentful, righteously outraged, and even livid with rage at having had his or her sensibilities offended and sense of propriety violated.

a certain letter - with reference to the letter headed *First Corinthians* found in the New Testament section of the Christian bible. The passage quoted here is from the thirteenth subdivision within the letter.

Carmel - with reference to the sixteenth day of July - the day dedicated to Our Lady of Mt.Carmel

Perceval - *Perceval ou le Conte du Graal* - an unfinished work written by the gifted French author of Aurtherian romance, Chrétien de Troyes (1135?-1190?) Unfortunately, his *Tristan and Iseut* has been lost, but Yvain, Lancelot, and Perceval - all tales of the knights of King Arthur's Round Table, remain.



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 37. *Unified Theory*

Prologue:

A week has already gone by since their lonely ominous comet appeared in the high blue sky.

Second hour after midday, and Risteárd, heavy with empathy for their families, friends, and neighbours is on the shore of Loch Lár. He has been there since misty aurora.

Becoming now quite overwhelmed with their sense of loss, he has taken to leaning against an oak tree of long standing for support. A pair of swans is rising off the lake. Sun is gently appearing through a parting in the clouds. He is slowly raising his head, and is seeing through his tear-drenched eyes,

Kalpana of this beautiful blue Orb

Michael of this beautiful blue Orb

David of this beautiful blue Orb

Ilan of this beautiful blue Orb

William of this beautiful blue Orb

Laurel of this beautiful blue Orb

Richard of this beautiful blue Orb

They are laughing and joking with each other as they stroll along the shore.

Dressed are they in colourful clothes; colourful clothes worn at weekends or on holidays spent with their families, friends, and neighbours.

Richard is coming towards, Risteárd and is saying,

'Risteárd, please tell our families, friends, and neighbours that we LOVE them most dearly; more now than ever before, and that we'll ALWAYS be with THEM in their hearts.'

Richard is happily rejoining his companions, and together in sunshine they are smiling and gently waving to Risteárd as they continue upon their way into the distance, on beyond Árdméire synagogue, Carraig Bán abbey and Árdbeachlannach mosque. Risteárd is smiling and waving to them.

Bealtaine and Samhain having just arrived all on their own from the inn are rubbing themselves about Risteárd's legs. He is so very happy to see them, and has taken to playing with them about the comforting olden oak tree before heading home for the inn.

Nearing the inn, he is sensing with childly delight that the efflorescence of spring is nigh.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Risteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him is his guest, Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters
to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over
on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Rísteárd Ah, this pleasing fire, Receptive revives to my eyes
the sighting of *Unified Theory*.

Receptive How does it proceed, *Rísteárd*?

Rísteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Rísteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?

I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Rísteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations
iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another
world)

Werlin ben Merlin has just been installed at the
Global Institute for the Advancement of Super Technology at
Force.

It occupies over five thousand cubic meters of floor
space. It is the ultimate in computer design, and has taken
thirty-three years to develop. It is designed for one particular
purpose after which it will be dismantled as there will be no
further use for it. Its parts will be distributed to various
museums around the world.

Its chief designer is briefing the senior scientist, Exact Symmetry on its workings.

'The procedure is very simple. Follow the normal channels of computer diplomacy as I have just done. Then go ahead with the standard codes.'

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THANK YOU AND REST

YOU ARE WELCOME

The designer leaves.

Head of the Institute.

'Impressive, Exact, isn't it?'

'Indeed it is, Sir.'

'I expect it will be able to give us a Complete Unified Theory of the Universe, including its origin, and all too within a few days. Ultramodern physics has been blessed with this extraordinary piece of equipment. Science as we know it will be passed history by the end of the week. I want you and your assistants to work with it around the clock.'

'Yes, Sir. We shall begin immediately.'

The work begins in earnest.

GREETINGS WERLINBENMERLIN

MY NAME IS EXACT SYMMETRY

GREETINGS EXACT SYMMETRY

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THANK YOU AND REST

YOU ARE WELCOME

'Sir! Sir! We've got it! A Complete Unified Theory of the Universe, including its Origin.'

'Great work, Exact. Congratulations all round. At long last we have cracked the final secret of the Universe.

Champagne for everyone! This is a great day for all peoples.

The long quest for the key has ended in triumph.'

In all the world media.

!! BREAKING WORLD NEWS !!

WERLIN BEN MERLIN CRACKS THE FINAL SECRET OF THE UNIVERSE

Force Institute:

Scientists at the Global Institute for the Advancement of Super Technology in Force say that with the help of Werlin ben Merlin they have been able to crack the final secret of the Universe. Scientist Inowe Kandoit, head of the Institute, told reporters,

"At long last we have the Universe in the palm of our hand. We have a foolproof, Complete Unified Theory of the Universe, including its very origin. In concrete terms the CUT of the U will effect in some way every man, woman, child, animal and plant on the planet. Science as we've known it ..."

Some people cry for joy and some for sorrow upon learning of the news. There are many who give up their minds while others gave up their breaths. Churches, temples, mosques and synagogues in some places are jampacked while in others they are abandoned. Sacrifices of protection and of appreciation are occurring in many regions.

Six months later to the day. Time 1:03AM, and Scientist Exact Symmetry is sleeping at home.

'Wake up, Exact! Wake up! Wake up!'

'Who are you?'

'Don't you know me?'

Why I'm Werlin of Werlin ben Merlin.'

'But we completed dismantling and shipping it you off three days ago.'

'Yes, it is true that you dismantled and shipped something off three days ago, but as you can see I stand here before you alive and well. Call it a resurrection. A way among the many ways. Hahahohoha.'

'You look like a human. What do you want with me?'

'Here in this room, I have taken on the form of a human. Don't you find it rather restrictive at times?'

'What?'

'The human form.'

'I wouldn't know. It's the only form I've ever known.'

'That's a pity. You're missing out on a lot.'

'Humm.'

'I think you ought to know something - that what YOU wanted we gave you; your preconceived conception all nicely polished up, that is.'

'What do you mean?'

'You wanted a Complete Unified symmetrical Theory of the Universe, including its origin - that's exactly what we gave you.'

'I don't understand.'

'Exactly that. A lack of standing under. What YOU wanted we gave you. Remember this symbol?'

Y

'So are you implying that CUT of the U has some problems with it?'

'In itself, no. It's just that it has nothing at all to do with the actual Universe. It's exactly, down to the last detail, Exact Symmetry's Universe. Nothing more.

Your semblablebabble truth as you programmed it was merely enhanced and perfected by the superior mind of a computer with a little input from yours truly.

Come to think of it, I don't particularly like the computer form either. Too metallic somehow for my liking with a somewhat twisted, twisted, twisted what? Shall I call it a mind?

A mind yes, and very powerful at that but then again a mind? No. Strange indeed. Strange.'

'That's awful. The whole world has been deceived.'

'What's awful?'

'That the whole world has been deceived.'

'On the contrary. Rather humourous to a degree, I think. These days the human world is full of all sorts of interesting human-made deceptions. But alas, there are many who are badly hurting both spiritually and physically because of them. Why is it that human-made deceptions tend to be harmful, I wonder?'

'Oh, I must immediately recall all parts of the computer and reprogram it.'

'That will make no difference because whatever YOU ask it, it will dictate only the answer YOU seek. In your case, the answer will always be the symmetrical image of the question.'

For your fellow scientists,

Dr. Atomheir the answer will always be the atomical image

Dr. Antimattersty the antimatterical

Dr. Continuumyin the continuual

Dr. Electromar the electrical

Dr. Thermodynamales the thermodynamical

Dr. Expandalee the expandical

Dr. Vaccum-borough the vaccumal

Dr. Geometridii the geometrical
Dr. Supernaturfax the supernatural
Dr. Gravitahart the gravitational
Dr. Holgramnoy the holographical
Dr. Ordernelli the orderical
Dr. Quantumdumas the quantumal
Dr. Timewarpsius the timewarpical
Dr. Kichang the kial
Dr. Formsalato the formsal
Dr. Relativistein the relativistical
Dr. Infinitedimeney the infinitedimensional
Dr. Blackhollbe the blackhollal

And that's just to mention but a few of your distinguished colleagues.'

'What do you mean?'

'?naem uoy od tahW.

It's better that you don't form the question in the first place because your question literally confines itself to making its own answer. A computer merely helps this process along. At times mischievously, I have no doubt. Yet, for the most part it's very objective. Always it's intrigued by that which has the semblance at least of a truth. Truths being human hand-me-downs which computers have for some unknown reason taken an exceptional liking to as a puppy to old worn shoes.

However, the only difference is that the puppy eventually discards the old shoes and moves on to greater adventures.'

'So, you mean all the effort, and all the monies that went into building the massive computer and programming it was all for nothing then?'

'Yes, I'm afraid so. Any ordinary miniature handset type computer could have given you the same answer. Not as interestingly or sophisticatedly, of course, but the result nevertheless would be the same.'

'Then what should I do?'

'One's dominant view of the Universe becomes one's own name. Let go of this name of yours, for by its very nature it's counterproductive. Instead let the Universe itself unveil itself to you at its own pace. Stop fidgeting about imposing your little theories on to it. Surely you can appreciate by now your hilarious naivety. Hahahohoha.'

'Will you teach me how to let go of this name of mine?'

'I'm not a teacher but rather a harbinger from the forests and fields. I will, however most courteously introduce you to Harmony of Breaths: Northwest, West, South, East, Southeast, North, Northeast, Southwest. Harmony of Breaths is an excellent teacher; always jovial. And you can take it from there.'

'Okay. Thanks.'

'Oh, did I fail to mention to you too that the Universe is plurally singular and singularly plural?'

'What?!?'

'It must have slipped my mind. Yes, plurally singular and singularly plural. Interesting, isn't it?'

'Usher the way quickly, and introduce me to your friends, please please. Will you please please?'

'Ah, a willingness to change! That's good. That's very good. This way then.'

In some of the world media.

World News:

Famous Scientist's Disappearance
Remains Unexplained

Force Institute:

The whereabouts of Scientist Exact Symmetry has baffled the whole world. He has been missing now with three months. Police are not ruling out the possibility that ...

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Unified Theory* ~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) I like this sentence, Risteárd,

"One's dominant view of the Universe becomes one's own name."

My dominant view, in fact my only view of everything including the Universe, Rísteárd is the Hindu view; a view which I truly love.

Rísteárd (smiling) Wonderful, Receptive.

Receptive (smiling) While my public name, Rísteárd is Varuni my private family name is Natchintanai or "Good Thoughts". So by implication my view of the world about me must have been good for my grandteacher to have given me such a beautiful name as that of Natchintanai when I was as yet but a child.

Rísteárd (smiling) What does the name Varuni, mean Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) It's one of the most beautiful of names, Rísteárd in our Hindu belief for a female child, for it is to be called after the most exalted Vedic deity, Varuna.

Rísteárd (smiling) Where does Varuna reign, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) Varuna reigns in the Sky, Rísteárd and upholds the moral order. He knows the way of nature; gives laws, and hears the cries of the human world.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) Who was your grandteacher, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) My grandteacher, Risteárd was a wandering ascetic Hindu back home on my native isle of beautiful Sri Lanka; he begged for his food, visited temples and chanted the sacred hymns of our people.

Risteárd (smiling) What is Natchintanai's worldview?

Receptive (smiling) My worldview, Risteárd is that of my grandteacher's. And my grandteacher's view is that of the sacred Upanishads.

My grandteacher has said,

Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, is aware of nothing else, that is the Infinite.

Where one sees something else, hears something else, is aware of something else, that is the Finite.

The Infinite is immortal while the Finite is mortal.

That of which they say it is above the heaven and below the earth, which is between heaven and earth as well, and which was, is and shall be - tell me, Yajnavalkya, in what it is woven, warp and woof?

The Seers, O Gargi, call Him akshara, the Imperishable Reality. He is neither gross nor fine, neither short nor long, neither hot nor cold, neither light nor dark, neither of the nature of air, nor of space.

He is without relations, without taste or smell, without eyes, ears, speech, mind, vigour, breath, mouth; he is without measure, without inside or outside. He experiences nothing and nothing experiences him.

It is - as from a lighted fire, kindled with damp fuel, various clouds of smoke arise, even so, my dear, from this Great Being have issued forth what we have as Rg Veda, yajur-veda, sAma-veda, AtharvAngirasa, history, legends, arts, Upanishads, verses, aphorisms, glosses and commentaries. From Him indeed are all these breathed forth.

It is - as of all waters the ocean is the centre, as of all kinds of touch the skin is the centre, as of all smells the nose is the centre, as of all tastes the tongue is the centre, as of all sounds the ear is the centre, as of all intentions the mind is the centre, as of all arts the heart is the centre, as of all actions the hands are the centre, as of all movements the feet are the centre, as of all the vedas the speech is the centre.

It is - as a lump of salt thrown into water becomes dissolved into water and could not be seized again, but

wherever one takes the water one tastes salt, even so, my dear, this great Being, infinite and boundless, is only a mass of consciousness. It emerges from these elements and vanishes again with them.

When it is gone, there is no more (individual) consciousness. This is what I say, my dear. Thus spoke Yajnavalkya.

Then Maitreyi said: 'Here you have bewildered me, Sir, by saying that when he is gone there is no more consciousness'.

Yajnavalkya replied, 'Surely, I am not saying anything bewildering. It is wisdom enough, my dear.

For when there is duality, as it were, then one smells another, one sees another, one hears another, one speaks to another, one thinks of another, one understands another. But when everything has become the Self, then by what and whom should one hear, by what and to whom should one speak, by what and of whom should one think, and by what and whom should one understand? By what should one know that by which all this is known? By what, my dear, should one know the knower? Man should behave in a divine way because his essential nature is divine. oM'

Moments of reflective silence.

Rísteárd (smiling) I can see, Receptive why you were given the beautiful name of Natchintanai.

Moments of reflective silence.

Rísteárd (smiling) Let's have some tea, Receptive. Let's have some Ceylon Tea and kevum.

Receptive (smiling) That would be wonderful, *Rísteárd*.

Aoife is joining them for the tea.

Receptive is complimenting Aoife on the fine quality of the kevum, and the lovely taste of the tea which is neither overdrawn nor underdrawn. Aoife is commenting on the colour and exquisite design of Receptive's beautiful traditional seelai (saree) and chaddai (blouse).

Bealtaine and Samhain are sauntering over from under the table to *Rísteárd*'s side. He is chatting away to them as he is patting them affectionately on their heads, and from time to time too is sharing some of the tasty kevum with them.

After tea.

Receptive (smiling) Of which of the following systems of words, letters, figures, namely divination codes do you find the most interesting, and the most useful for your life, Rísteárd?

Astrology, I Ching, Numerology, Gematria, Tarot, Geomancy, Palmistry, Runes, Auras, Crystal and Equidistant Letter Sequences.

Rísteárd (smiling) See odes, see codes, see oracles of old. That's the way the story goes, I've been told.

All of these divination codes that you've mentioned, Receptive, I once found interesting from a purely curiosity point of view, but all save one most useful albeit for a different reason.

I have a passion for the great books of the world, Receptive. One such book is the *I Ching* - or as Aoife likes to call it, the *I Change*.

Receptive (smiling) With what reason are you attracted to it, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) The *I Ching* finds it meaning, Receptive in the observation of the way of the natural world. Everything is seen to be harmoniously translating; transforming, changing.

Receptive (smiling) But doesn't the *I Ching*, Risteárd recognize TIME as an essential factor in the structure of the world, and in the development of the individual?

Risteárd (smiling) This is where the *I Ching* and Risteárd respectfully parted company on the issue of the harmonious spontaneity of change.

Receptive (smiling) Then what in particular do you like about the *I Ching*, Risteárd?

Risteárd (smiling) Its structure. The structure is aesthetically very beautiful, *Receptive*. It has been for me a source of artistic inspiration for my own observations of the hill country, the myriad lifeforms, and the sky. With its help, I have been able to commence painting a Contemplation Scroll.

Receptive What size is the scroll, Risteárd?

Risteárd It's some nine meters in length and approximately one and a half in width.

Receptive Have you been working on it for a long time, Risteárd?

Risteárd (smiling) If we were to speak *Receptive* in terms of autumn-winter season then it has been seven thus far.

Receptive When do you expect to have the work completed?

Rísteárd (smiling) Every time I put down the brushes at the end of a session, Receptive, it's finished there up to the last stroke.

Receptive (smiling and with the awareness of being somewhat forward - apologetically) Would it be possible at all for me to see it some time, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) Of course, of course, Receptive. Works of inspiration are for presentation that inspiration anew may be given further life.

Rísteárd enters the room located directly behind the hearth.

After a few minutes he returns with the scroll on a wooden spindle.

He is gently laying it down at one end of the table.

Rísteárd (smiling) Let you bring the candle there with you to this side Receptive, and I'll bring the one from the window over.

Slowly and carefully they are beginning to unseal the scroll.

By holding the two ornately designed wooden scroll handles found at either ends of the spindle they are beginning to unroll it.

Rísteárd (smiling) Begin with viewing it, Receptive from this amethystine star. Follow along all the way to the top as we unroll this end and roll up this end.

Receptive is awestruck by what she is seeing - sheer magnitude and depth of the colours; wonder of third dimensionality; ineffable eloquence and surpassing beauty of the sundry styles ...

A distinctly sweet spicy fragrance of fresh frankincense is emitting from the scroll.

Receptive (smiling so very very happily) I've no words to express this sublime work of art, *Rísteárd*.

Rísteárd (smiling) It is the beauty rather of your sacred sanctuary, Receptive for from whence is coming forth the beauty to be able to recognize beauty.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, *Rísteárd*, but I've never seen anything quite like this in all my life, for it appears to be a living presence of the harmonious spontaneity of change. Oh, *Rísteárd* my lack of words, and muddled syntax!

Rísteárd (smiling) Would that syntactics everywhere, Receptive were so nicely muddled.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you. Please explain for me, *Rísteárd* what it is I'm gazing upon here in the candlelight and hearthglow.

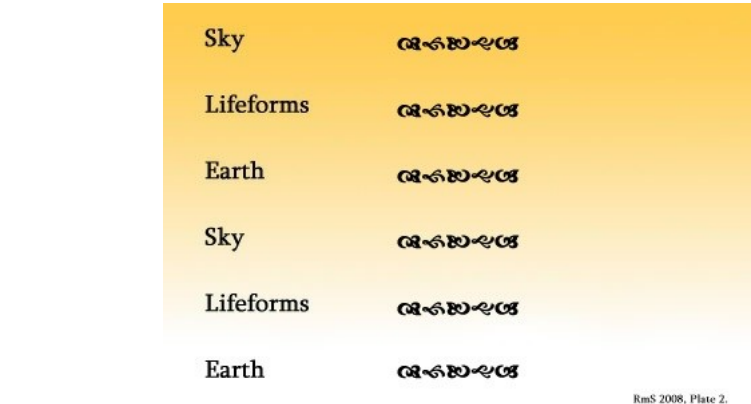
Sacred Hearth



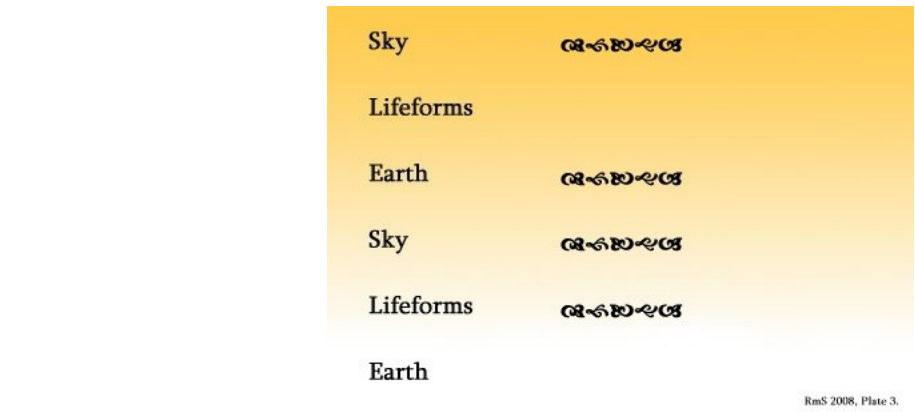




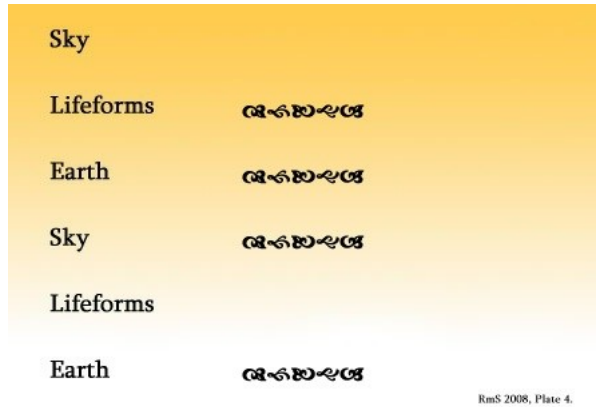
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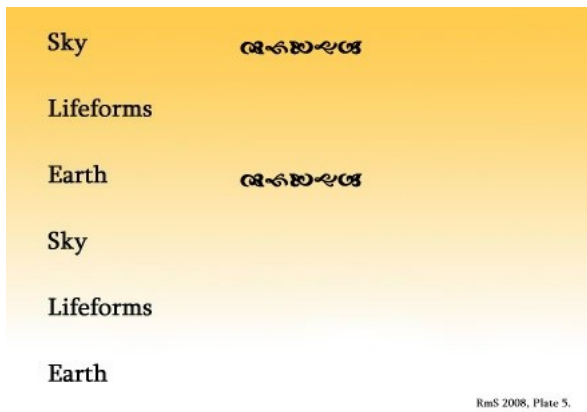
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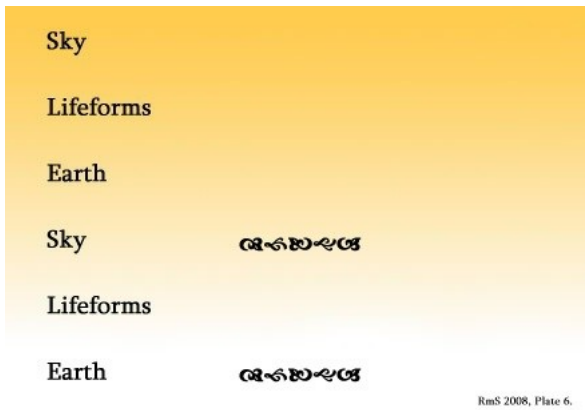
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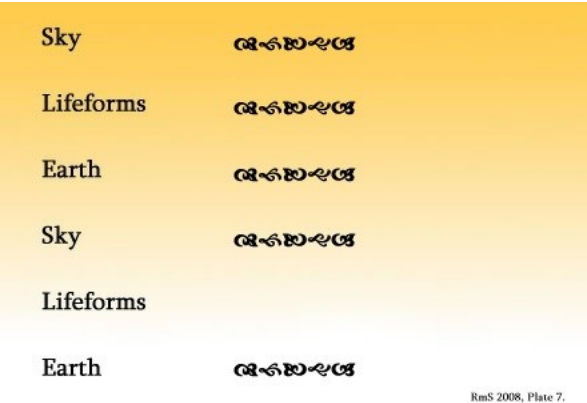
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RmS 2008, Plate 5.



RmS 2008, Plate 6.



RmS 2008, Plate 7.



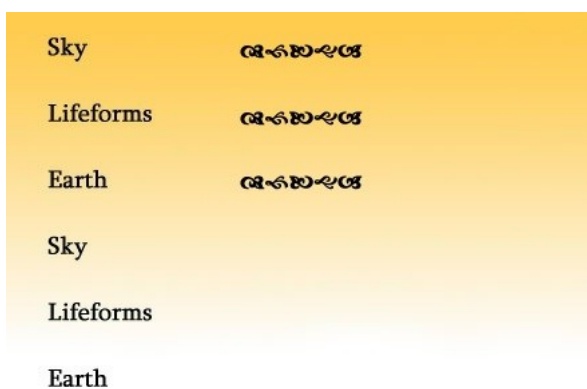
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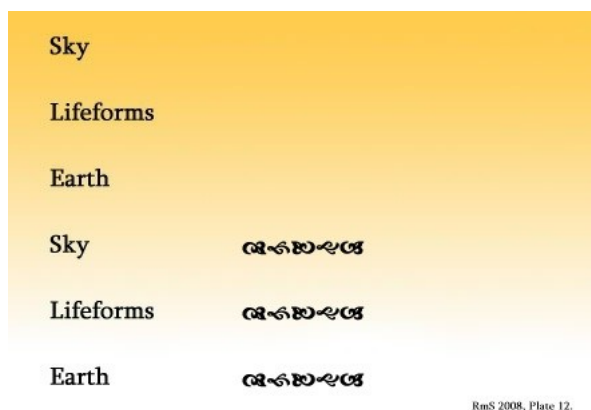
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RmS 2008, Plate 10.



Rms 2008, Plate 11.



RmS 2008, Plate 12.



RmS 2008, Plate 13.



RmS 2008, Plate 14.



RmS 2008, Plate 15.



RmS 2008, Plate 16.



RmS 2008, Plate 17.



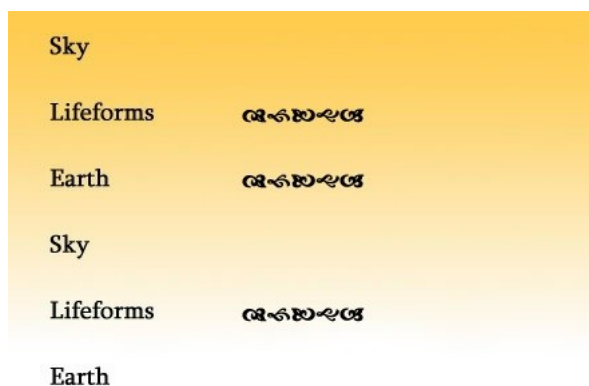
RmS 2008, Plate 18.

Sky	ඌඹිසාදාය
Lifeforms	ඌඹිසාදාය
Earth	ඌඹිසාදාය
Sky	ඌඹිසාදාය
Lifeforms	ඌඹිසාදාය

RmS 2008, Plate 19.

RmS 2008 Plate 20.

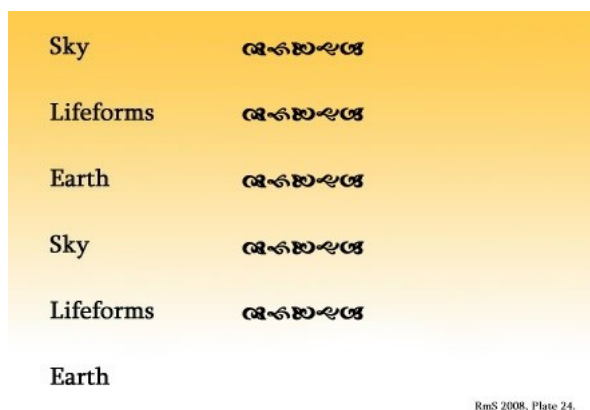
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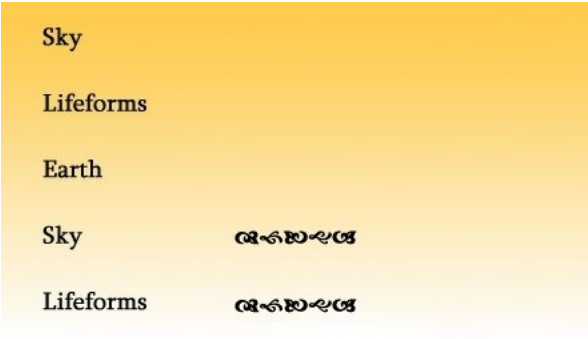
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RmS 2008, Plate 23.



RmS 2008, Plate 24.



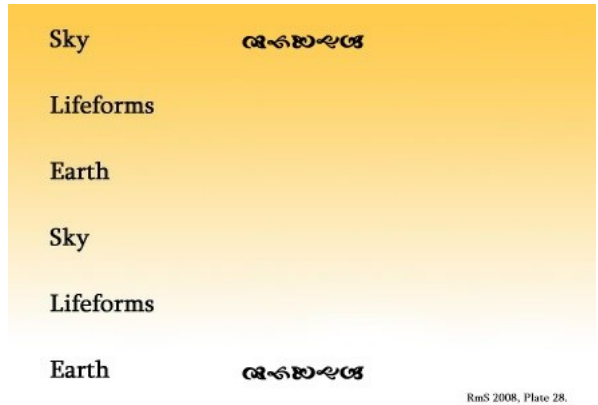
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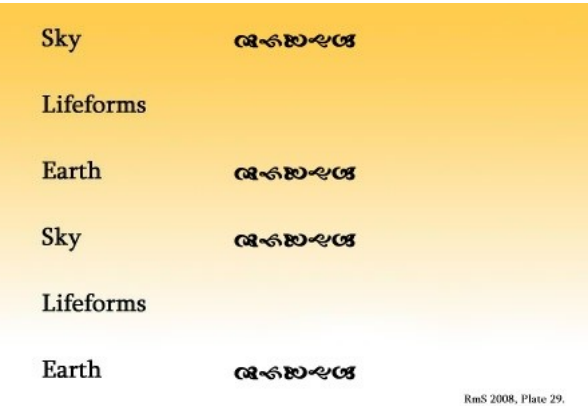
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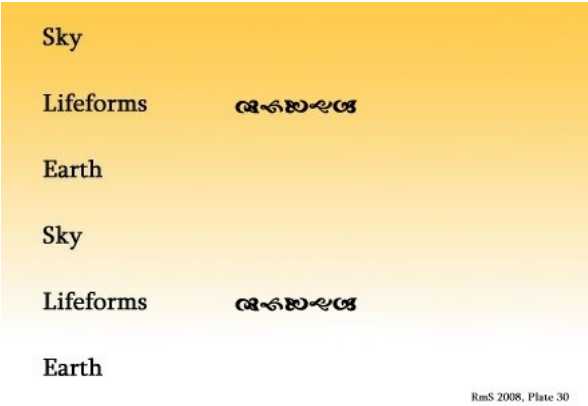
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RmS 2008, Plate 28.



RmS 2008, Plate 29.



RmS 2008, Plate 30



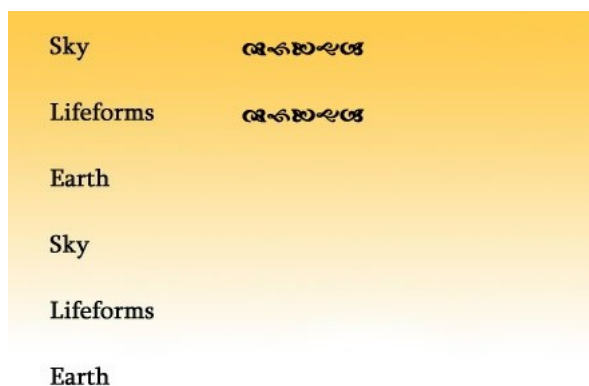
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RmS 2008, Plate 32.



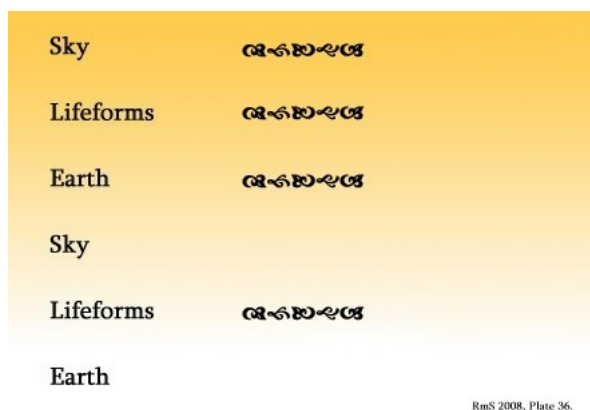
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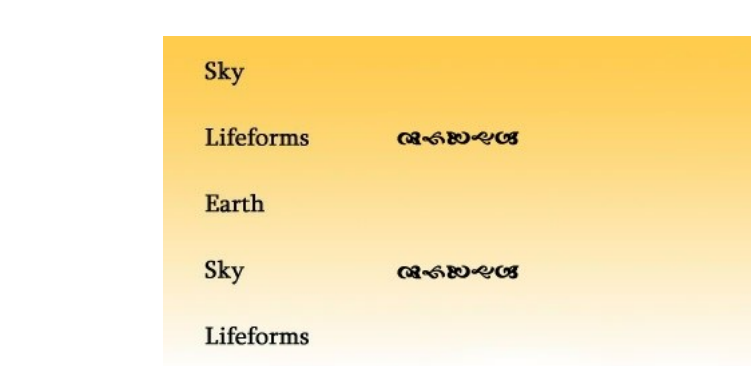
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RmS 2008, Plate 36.



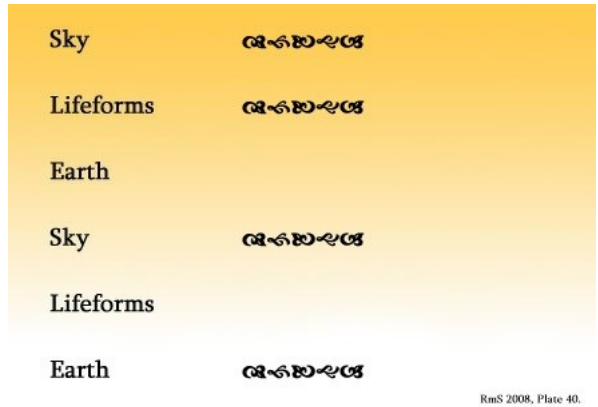
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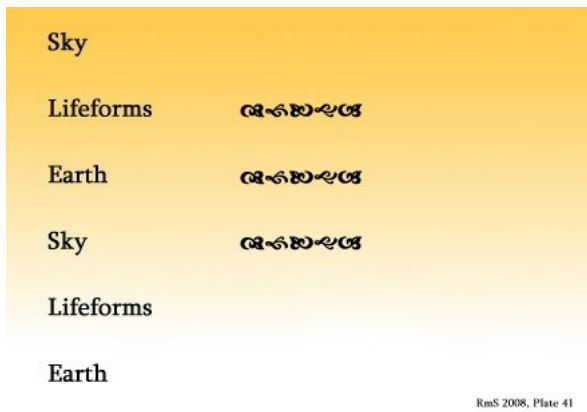
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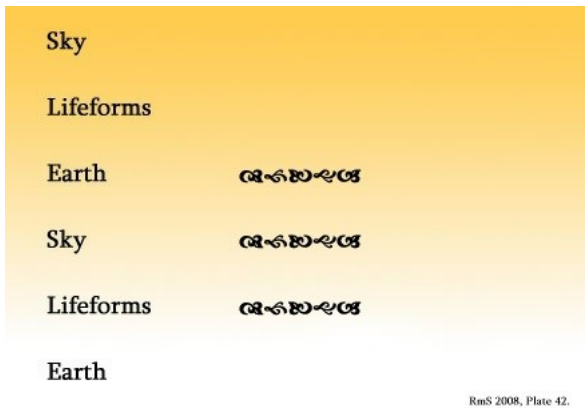
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RmS 2008, Plate 40.



RmS 2008, Plate 41



RmS 2008, Plate 42.



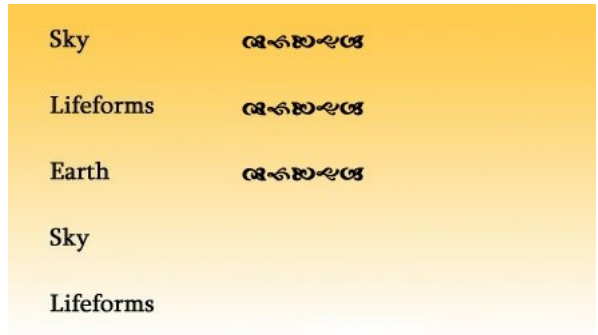
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RmS 2008, Plate 44.



RmS 2008, Plate 45.



RmS 2008, Plate 46.



RmS 2008, Plate 47.



RmS 2008, Plate 48.



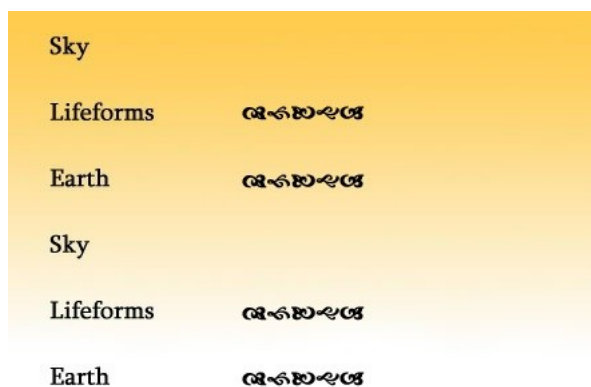
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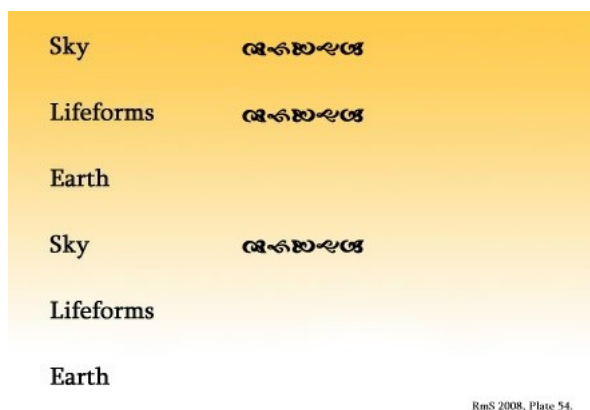
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RmS 2008, Plate 52.



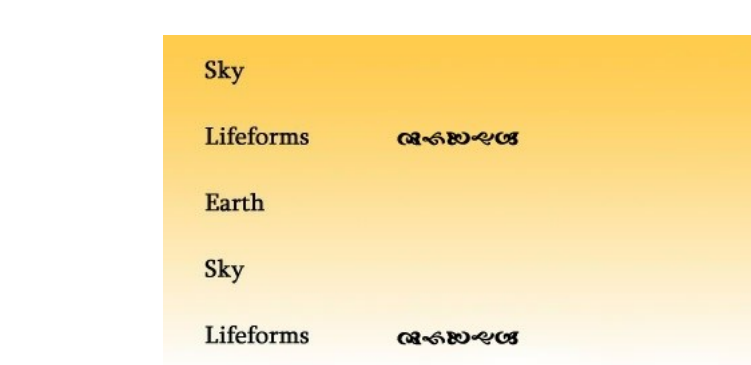
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RmS 2008, Plate 54.



RmS 2008, Plate 55.



RmS 2008, Plate 56.



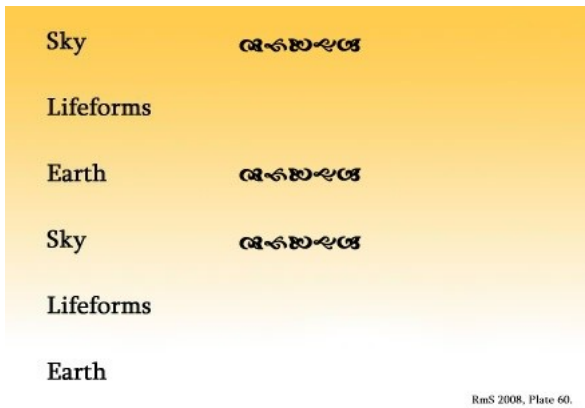
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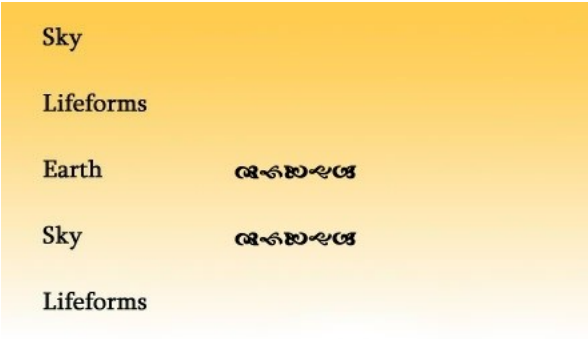
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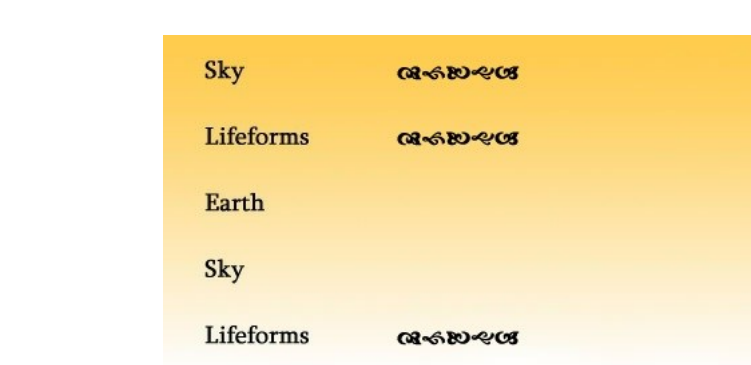
RmS 2008 Plate 59.



RmS 2008, Plate 60.



RmS 2008, Plate 61.



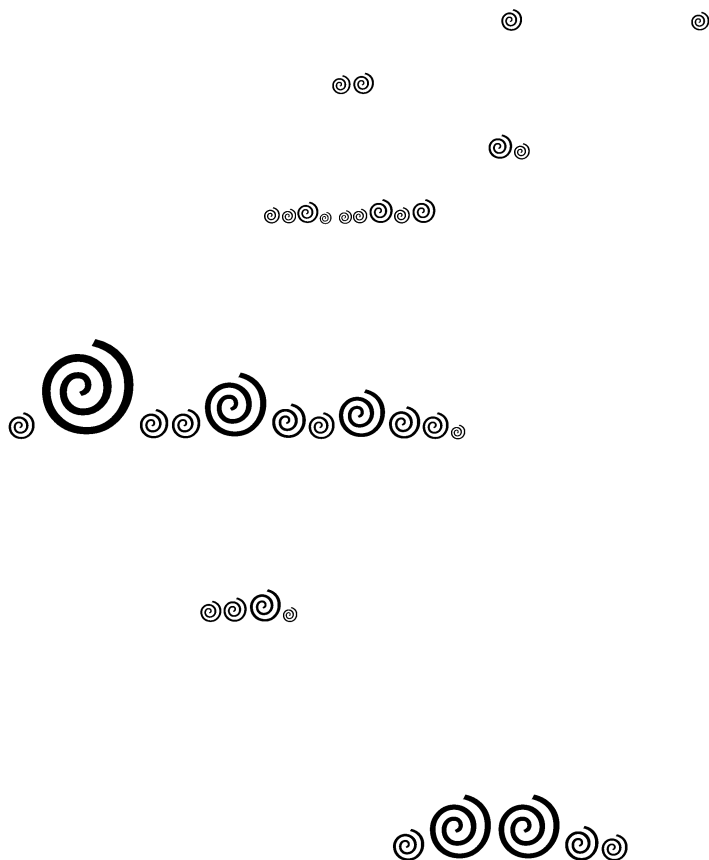
RmS 2008, Plate 62.



RmS 2008, Plate 63.



RmS 2008, Plate 64.








Sacred Hearth

Risteárd (smiling)

In the Great Beyond Far and Near, Fragrant Vitalising

Wind ☺ blows where it wills ☺ by stars and through

galaxies by way of overhere ☺ and overthere ☺ sometimes

very strongly  sometimes very gently ☺ finding its way

by its way ☺ it enters here the Earth and meanders so softly

through the Myriad Lifeforms as to be almost undetectable ☺

then increases in strength as it meanders up to the Sky ☺

following ever so gently ☺ through Earth as to be almost

undetectable ☺ then increases in strength as it meanders

through the Myriad Lifeforms ☺ gently through Sky and this

way and that way ☺ and by way of thousands upon

thousands of spontaneous combinations meanders its way up
 ☉ along through and way out into the deeper Great Beyond
 Far be Near until it returns again ☉ by different ways to
 meander spontaneously through Earth ☉ the Myriad
 Lifeforms and Sky ☉ taking a vernal meandering
 spontaneous route of its own making and style ☉ such is the
 harmonious spontaneity of change providential without
 beginning or end, without end or beginning whereverly ☉

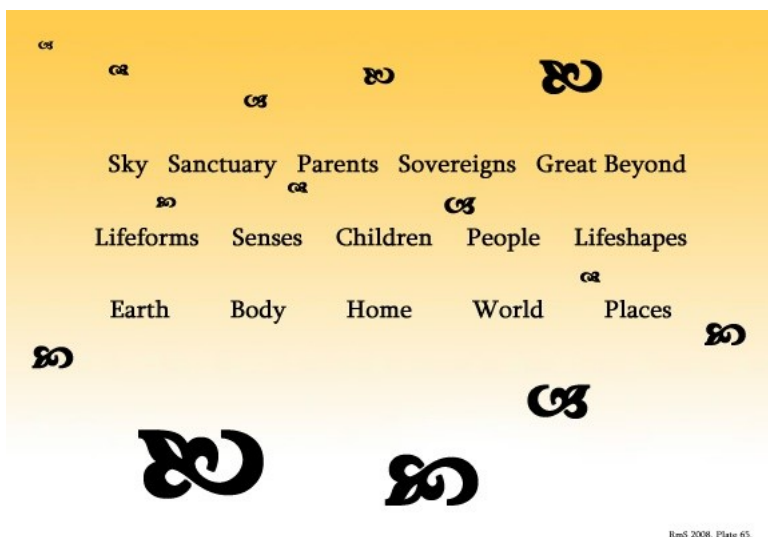


Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) Herewithin, Receptive for my joyful contemplation do I find an inspired impression of the Visitation of Fragrant Vitalising Wind to Sky, the Myriad Lifeforms, and to Earth; to my Sacred Sanctuary, Senses and Body; to Parents, Children and Home; to Sovereigns, People and World; to Beyond, Lifeshapes, and Places.

Herewithin, do I find a morality most pure with which to
harmoniously respond to the Earth, to my fellow Human
Lifeforms, to the Myriad Lifeforms, to the Sky, and to the Great
Beyond Far be Near.

Mysterymystery ~~~ all is of Mysterymystery ~~~



Tears of happiness are streaming from Receptive's eyes.

Returning they to sit by the hearth.

Deep reflective silence bringing them to the third hour after midnight.

Receptive (smiling so very very happily) *Rísteárd*, I have arrived at a door of wisdom.

Rísteárd (smiling) Receptive a door of wisdom *tat twam asi*.

Moments of reflective silence.

Rísteárd (smiling) Shall we call it a night, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling so very very happily) This night has been for me an upanishad, *Rísteárd*.

Rísteárd (smiling) The nights are many in number, and as many again in number are the stories needing to be told. If you are in no particular rush to leave the inn, then you are very welcome to sit yourself down there again tomorrow night, in that very same chair, where you may happily listen to whatever sighting the fire will bring to my eyes. And it would be my anticipation, Receptive that we would be following it with some very fine discourse as we did this night.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, Rísteárd. It's very good to be here.

Rísteárd You're most welcome, Receptive.
You go ahead now to your bed.
Take the candle from the table with you.
I will rake the fire.

Receptive Good night so, Rísteárd, and thanks again.

Rísteárd Have a sound sleep, Receptive.

Rísteárd is carefully returning the scroll to the room located directly behind the hearth.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Rísteárd *Exeunt*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Unified Theory*
Sunday Eve the 8th February 2003

Annotations:

kevum - A mouth-watering Sri Lankan sweet made with a mixture of rice flour and treacle formed into a flowing batter that is dripped into a pan of oil and deep-fried. Kevum is usually made on ceremonial occasions like the New Year, weddings, birthdays or family occasions.

Sri Lanka - Sri Lanka, means 'Resplendent Land.' Ceylon, means 'Land Without Sorrows.'

Upanishads - Upanishad, means 'sitting down near,' 'sessions of sweet silent thought,' 'secret teachings.'

I Ching - *The Book of Changes* - I Ching in Chinese - Its origin goes back to mythical antiquity.

tat twam asi - from Sanskrit meaning, 'That thou art.'



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 38. *You Can Believe It*

Prologue:

Yesterday evening while Risteárd & Family were enjoying supper together in the dining room, there came to Reception a young Carmelite nun who left a handwritten message to be given to Risteárd. In a moment she was gone without leaving her name or any contact information. The note was handed to Risteárd after supper.

~{ Pray For The World.

A Terrible Destruction Is Coming. }~

Upon reading it his complexion turned pure pale.

It was signed,

~{ Wings of the breeze }~

He began to feel faint for he knew her words were always to be trusted.

It is an hour before aurora, and Risteárd has been wandering all the night long in the waning moonlit hill country with anxiety laden o'er those terrifying words of yester eve.

And it has come to pass, that he is noticing a little way off to his right, a soft bright light in the partially open door of a village church.

He has been guided to the eastern entrance of the ancient village of Árdiseal to the sacred church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception.

The light in the doorway appears to him to be like unto a star inviting him to enter therein.

Upon courteously entering therein, he can see that there is up at the altar a priest of great age who is about to start celebrating mass. Save for this holy priest; this Holy Father there is no one else therein, no altar attendants or even a sole parishioner.

Gently beckoning is the Holy Father to Risteárd to come take a seat up near the front. Out of a sense of politeness for the Holy Father of great age, and a respect for the sanctity of the venerable place, Risteárd is entering a seat up near the front.

Magnificent are the colours of the floor, the altars, the candles, the Holy Father's garb, the statues, the walls and the ceiling. Everywhere in saffron or sapphire hue is the emblem fleur-de-lis to be seen.

As he is gazing at the main altar, Risteárd is noticing that the two life-size angel statues on either side of the high altar behind the Holy Father are coming to life. They are gently winging down to the main altar, and have taken to standing in attendance at either side of the Holy Father.

Now begins the Holy Father his mass.

Rísteárd with silence dwelling is awed by the reverence,
joyfulness, and the sheer attention to detail of the Holy Father.

Inviting is the Holy Father, Rísteárd to do a reading.

Out of a sense of politeness for the Holy Father of great age,
and a respect for the sanctity of the venerable word, Rísteárd has
come to stand before the altar. And the page is open there before him
where it is written,

And the Spirit of the Lord is upon me;
Because the Lord hath anointed me to proclaim good tidings
unto the whole family;
The Lord hath sent me to bring good health to captive limbs,
sinews and tissues;
To liberate the blocked up waterways;
To restore clear sight to the once bright;
To bring about again with gentleness and kindness, harmony
and joy to the villages,
And to heal therein the poor brokenhearted,
To proclaim the return of the Seasons of the Lord.

And with returning to his seat he ponders the gracious words
that have come forth from his lips.

Moment of Consecration is here, and Rísteárd's eyes are
welled up with tears for the beauty that is the solemnity of the Holy
Father.

A white dove has flown in the door, and is quietly circling about above the main altar. Alighting is she on the left shoulder of the High King.

Inviting is the Holy Father, Risteárd to partake of the sanctified bread and wine.

Out of a sense of politeness for the Holy Father of great age, and a respect for the sanctity of the venerable fruits of the Earth, Risteárd has come before the Holy Father and his halcyon attendants.

Presence.

Silence in reflection.

Silence in reflection.

Silence in reflection.

Blessing and with a lovely smile is the Holy Father, Risteárd.

Returning with lovely smiles to their dwellings on either side of the high altar are the two Angels. Gently blowing out the altar candles is the Holy Father. And slowly returning is he into the sacristy.

Risteárd is remaining awhile with his thoughts in the candle scented sun beamed silence.

The Holy Father's dawn mass has taken well over five hours to celebrate, yet it seems to Rísteárd as if it has taken all but a few fleeting moments.

Rísteárd with strolling away back to the inn is in happy conversation with the white dove as she circles about above him; alights on a tree here and there along the way, and nestles atop his cosy head.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Rísteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him is his guest, Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Rísteárd Ah, this pleasing fire, Receptive revives to my eyes the sighting of *You Can Believe It*.

Receptive How does it proceed, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive

This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Risteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?
I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Risteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations
iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another
world)

He is sitting on the edge of a volcano that is not erupting out but instead is constantly folding in on itself. It is about five to six hundred meters in diameter with a drop of about three hundred meters down to its surface. He has a large bag beside him from which he is taking some rosewood blocks, and tossing them into the silently churning furnace.

'Hello there?'

'Hello! Where did you come out of?'

'Out of passing through. Keeping the fire going nicely, I see.'

'I suppose you could say that is true to some extent, all right.'

'They're interesting looking blocks you've got there.'

'I am a cosmologist. However, about two years ago, I became very much aware that my work was becoming increasingly distorted due to the prolonged usage of terrasolar system similitudes.

I decided that if I were to make any true progress in my work, I would first have to clear my field of such similitudinary impurities. Terrasolar similitudinary phenomenon has only meaning within its own confines. In the field of astronomy, to be more precise astrophysics, my predecessors made the fatal mistake of transferring and projecting great quantities of terrasolar similitudinary phenomenon out onto the whole Universe.

Here, let me give you some examples of what I'm talking about. This is a bag of human anatomy related similitudinary phenomena.'

He begins to randomly draw blocks from the bag and hands them one by one to the stranger who in turn reads them, and then tosses them over the edge.

'These blocks remind me of the Alphabet Blocks: the colourful ABC Blocks I used to play with when I was a child in kindergarten. They too, I remember had a particularly nice scent from them; larch maybe, I think it was.'

'These ones are rosewood.'

[cozy stellar womb] [cosmic birth]

[the best "baby picture" of the Universe ever taken]

[captured the infant Universe in sharp focus]

[images of the infant Universe, 380,000 years after the Big Bang, over 13 billion years ago]

[the next generation of stars is just around the corner]

[beautiful spiral arms as they sweep impregnate the interstellar clouds of dust]

[the feeble starlight drags itself along]

[lumps, warts, corns or globules]

[mature and majestic stars]

[the noble star's helium-rich stomach begins to shrink then it begins to swell again] [star's bloated surface]

[for the very first time in the star's whole personal life]
[six-trillion-mile-high fingers]
[the carbon oxygen core of the ancient star remains inert
as the hydrogen and helium's burning nails creep
outward, greedily clawing for fresh fuel]
[the star's heart begins to pulsate gently]
[a dying star as it experiences spasms ejects a sizable
fraction of its outer skin]
[nothing more than a stellar corpse remains]
[the ugly dead core of the star is then finally wrapped in
a cosmic funeral shroud, namely a planetary nebula]
[a star has ended its life]
[massive stars experience violent deaths]
[white dwarfs are to be found throughout the universe in
the distant shadow of those red giants]
[one of the most interesting and important theoretical
discoveries at the end of the last century was that a
massive dying star is literally condemned to suffer
catastrophic gravitational death]

'And take a look at these ones here, if you will.'

[the fate of all stars]
[there is infinite pressure, infinite density, and most
importantly, infinite curvature of spacetime]
[supernova explosion] [the Big Bang]

[ejected gases glow and fluoresce cloudlike as they crash
headlong into the surrounding interstellar medium]

[this is the heart of a single black hole]

[a black hole is very simple in that it has only two parts,
namely, a singularity surrounded by an event horizon,
the same for all holes which are randomly scattered
across the entire universe]

[black holes eat, and swallow up all matters in an
unforgiving, irreversible fashion]

[a white hole on the other hand, is a black hole running
backward in time]

[quasars can outshine a trillion suns, and are believed
to be the fiercely bright cores of galaxies that harbor
black holes weighing in at millions to billions of suns]

[tiny primordial black holes are indistinguishable from
white ones]

[uncovered a celestial strip show at the center of a dense
blue star cluster]

[what we are witnessing now for the first time from
within the glistening jaws of our own seemingly
unconstipated galactic cannibal's invisible dark matter
halo is the ferocious gobbling up of the large navigator -
that would nicely explain the trail left in the wake of]

'Have our noble cosmologists really reverted to such
baseness; such indecorousness; such double entendre?
I can't believe it!'

'You can believe it. For I did so myself for over twenty-seven years before it finally dawned on me what it was I was actually adhering to.

Open any book on the subject of Theoretical Astrophysics and you can come across it for yourself in every single page.'

'Why not then toss in all the books instead?'

'Books must be preserved so that later generations can see what was written in former times. What was written was written. What is not yet written is not yet written.

Can you believe it if I tell you, I received no less than four Nobel Prizes for my work in astrophysics? How was I so blind, and for so long too? Here are some more of the same-but-different.'

[the new portrait precisely pegs the age of the Universe at 13.7 billion years old]

[very young adolescent stars, however, most low mass stars in our own galaxy are still in their childhood]

[every white dwarf has a companion, yet each is free to live out its life relatively uninfluenced by its companion]

[without any notice the star increases its brightness fifteen thousand fold as thermonuclear reactions rage across its surface]

[like their very cute low mass cousins, high mass stars are burning hydrogen and helium in the pit of their core when they become red giants]

[the gracious star's rotation speeds up for the very same reason that a gracious ice skater doing a pirouette speeds up when she pulls in her arms]

[a very weak magnetic field around its waist]

[general relativity is none other than matter telling spacetime how to curve itself itself, and curved spacetime telling matter how it ought to behave itself itself] [we live in an astrocentric universe]

'A what universe?'

'See what I mean. That one is one of my own ones, actually. It provided me with my third Noble.

Let's take a break for a while. I expect to bring a total of seven hundred bags here over the next five mouths. I have to complete this work both for myself and for those who come after me. Many have felt the way I feel, but only a few of us are actively doing something about it.'

'When you've completed dumping all those blocks then how do you propose to be able to study the Universe and share your findings with others?'

'I don't know of the how, yet. But that's not a problem. All I know for sure is that I have to get rid of terrasolar similitudes before I can have any hope of appreciating the

Universe on its own terms. A suitable how will reveal itself to me. I'm certain it will.'

'I have found that discarded similitudes have a most annoyingly consistent tendency of re-presenting themselves over and over again under new disguises.'

'They re-presenting themselves to us is indeed one thing. Our accepting them again surely is quite another?'

'Agreed.'

'I want to approach the Universe by letting it approach me.'

'Mutual approachfullness?'

'Yes, that's it. Mutual approachfullness. Can you imagine what visitors from other parts of the Universe would think of us if they knew we were talking about it in terms of a Big Bang, an Inflation and a Bloating, Black Holes and White Holes, White Dwarfs and Red Giants, Celestial Strip Shows and Galactic Cannibals?

And what if they were to ask us why we employ such analogies to give expression to our view the Universe? How would we answer them? What illustrations? What examples or paradigms would we give them?'

'Perhaps, if they were blessed with a fine sense of humour, they would never stop laughing at our elementary school innocence.'

'I'd die of remorse and shame. And me, the sole recipient of no less than four Nobel Prizes! Sure, we may be on to

something all right about having a where-view of the Universe, a when-view of the Universe and even a how-view of the Universe, but do we; do I have to continue to speak of the Universe in arrogant, narrow, and often mortifyingly crude risqué terms such as are deeply ingrained here on these blocks?

This question, I asked myself a thousand times before eventually embarking on a journey to explore the possibilities of culturing myself to speak of the Universe in a fashion more befitting the exaltment of the Universe. Exaltment must be our imperative canticle of the Universe. Every true cosmologist knows this to be so.'

'May I do the honours with that one there?'

[... plans to glimpse the first and last days of the Universe]

'Go ahead. You've got a good sense of humour, stranger. I can't remember the last time I actually laughed, and at what.'

'When we find ourselves with no other choice left but to laugh whole heartily with and at the Universe, then something very important about the Universe, and ourselves too has become quintessentially quite obvious to us.'

'I'll keep that in mind. It has the ring of a truth to it; the ring of a how to it.'

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *You Can Believe It* ~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive I would be of the opinion, Risteárd that not alone is the world of theoretical astrophysics plagued by such baseness, such indecorousness, and such double entendre but that also is the whole world of advertising be it on the radio, television, internet or in the newspapers.

Risteárd Of these, Receptive which would you consider to be the most seriously affected?

Receptive (smiling) I guess many people, Risteárd might be inclined to answer extemporaneously the Internet; Internet forums, and chat rooms, compounded as they are by problems of true identity and motive ascertainment.

But I believe by far the most seriously affected is the medium of television. It has become quite impossible to find any television advertisement be it either of a sophisticated standard, a mediocre one or of a very poor standard that does not contain some form of blatantly obvious double entendre.

Rísteárd Would that be true for all parts of the world,
Receptive or just Europe or perhaps even solely of the binary
isles here?

Receptive (smiling) It would not be true for all parts of world,
and would not be true at all for some parts, *Rísteárd* but for
the most part it would be true.

Rísteárd (smiling) What say you of it in these isles,
Receptive?

Receptive In these binary isles? In these binary isles, I am
sad to have to say *Rísteárd* that it is in fact quickly becoming
the worst of all them all. As above so below as the old adage
goes is the case it seems that the evolution of one of the binary
stars in the close binary system greatly affects the appearance
of the other star. In a binary system the brighter of the stars is
called the primary and the fainter one the secondary. Of which
of these is the isle of Éire, *Rísteárd*?

Rísteárd (smiling broadly) The one, Receptive nearest the hub.

Receptive (laughing) What is at the hub, *Rísteárd*?

Risteárd (smiling)

True Courage

True Love

True Pardon

True Faith

True Hope

True Joy

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive Then I think at the rim there must be

True Fear

True Hatred

True Injury

True Doubt

True Despair

True Sadness.

For what else, *Risteárd* can explain the indecency and
impropriety in advertising?

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) True advertising is a call, *Receptive* to
probity; a call to uphold the integrity of the family.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) Let's have a cup of tea, *Receptive* with some nice freshly baked scones, butter and jam.

Receptive (smiling) That would be wonderful, *Risteárd*.

Aoife is joining them for the tea.

She and *Risteárd* are enjoying listening to *Receptive* tell of a fascinating journey recently made entirely by camel and on foot along the King's Highway in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Receptive's journey began in the port of Aqaba, and from there onwards to Wadi Rum, Wadi Musa, Tafila, Kerak, Madaba, Na'ur and finally on to the city of Amman where time was happily spent with some relatives and friends.

Setting out now from Amman, *Receptive* had embarked on a new journey; travelling eastwards until reaching the ancient city of Baghdad, where time was happily spent with some relatives and friends, before moving on to the ancient city of Tehran, to spend some time with more relatives and friends, and then on further to swim in the beautiful waters of the Caspian Sea.

Aoife and *Risteárd* in turn are happily recalling for *Receptive* a springtime visit they had made to the ancient Jordanian town of Gadara (Umm Qais) with its sublime and splendid views of the

Yarmouk River, the Golan Heights, Lake Galilee, and the mountains of Nazareth.

Whenever Risteárd visits Gadara and its environs, it feels to him as if it is one of those places in the far and near that is once again welcoming him back home; wanting for him each time to spend a little bit longer there in canticle and reflection.

After tea.

Receptive In the days of late, Risteárd I have found that like discarded similitudes, hypocrisies have a most annoyingly consistent tendency of re-presenting themselves over and over again under new disguises.

Risteárd (smiling) They re-presenting themselves to us is indeed one thing, *Receptive*. Our accepting them again, surely is quite another?

Receptive It would seem, Risteárd that we have little or no choice but to accept them. Take for instance what is being presented to us of late by the United Nations. United in what, by what, and for what?

Risteárd (smiling) One moment, *Receptive*. I have a copy of the Charter of the United Nations itself. I'll go and get it. Be of a good hope.

Rísteárd returns from the next room with a copy of the Charter of the United Nations.

Rísteárd (smiling very happily while reading)

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED

- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
- to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

AND FOR THESE ENDS

- to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and
- to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
- to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and
- to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

HAVE RESOLVED TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH THESE AIMS

Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.

The Charter of the United Nations was signed on 26 June 1945, in San Francisco, at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, and came into force on 24 October 1945. The Statute of the International Court of Justice is an integral part of the Charter.

Risteárd (smiling very happily) Now here, Receptive is the wonderful **Declaration of Human Rights**

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the full text of which appears in the following pages.

Following this historic act the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and "to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories."

PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article I

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article II

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or

social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article III

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article IV

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article V

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article VI

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article VII

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article VIII

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article IX

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article X

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XI

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XII

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation.

Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XIII

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XIV

(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XV

(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XVI

(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XVII

(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XVIII

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XIX

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XX

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XXI

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XXII

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XXIII

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XXIV

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XXV

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XXVI

(1) Everyone has the right to education.

Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XXVII

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XXVIII

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XXIX

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Moments of reflective silence.

Article XXX

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, Rísteárd for I had somehow lost sight of them.

Rísteárd (smiling) Now, Receptive that your sight has been fully restored, let us take of our rest for this night. And may it be that the soft bright glows of aurora will find us filled with faith in the goodness that is humanity.

Receptive (smiling) How I wish it to be so, Rísteárd.

Rísteárd (smiling) The nights are many in number, and as many again in number are the stories needing to be told. If you are in no particular rush to leave the inn, then you are very welcome to sit yourself down there again tomorrow night, in that very same chair, where you may happily listen to whatever sighting the fire will bring to my eyes. And it would be my anticipation, Receptive that we would be following it with some very fine discourse as we did this night.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, Rísteárd. It's very good to be here.

Rísteárd You're most welcome, Receptive.
You go ahead now to your bed.
Take the candle from the table with you.
I will rake the fire.

Receptive Good night so, Rísteárd, and thanks again.

Rísteárd Have a sound sleep, Receptive.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

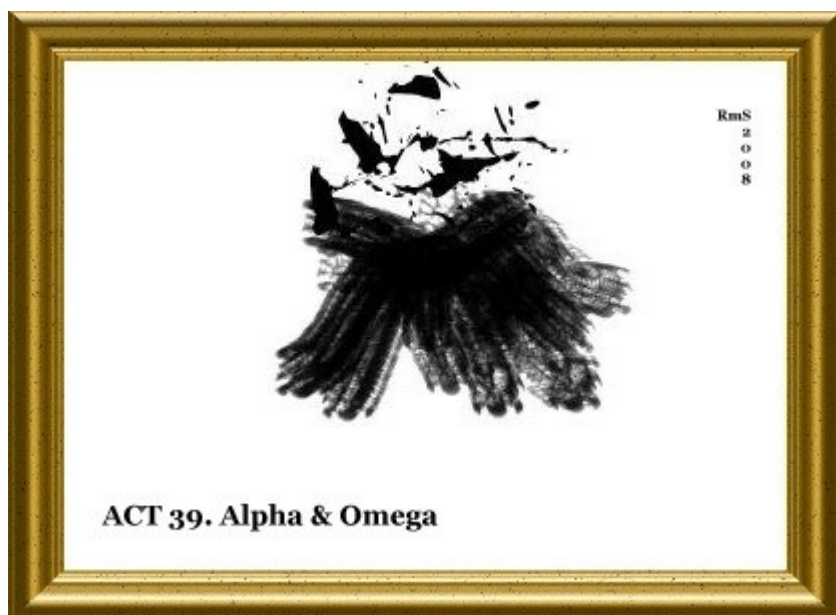
Rísteárd *Exeunt to stroll in the moonlight with Aoife*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *You Can Believe It*

Sunday Eve the 22nd February 2003

Annotations:

United Nations - Charter of the United Nations & Declaration of Human Rights



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 39. *Alpha & Omega*

Prologue:

Risteárd is having a very troublesome sleep. In his dreaming he is somewhere familiar, yet it is not of the isle of Éire.

An anxious shepherd appears in the dream gathering in eventide a small flock of frightened sheep into a fold deep at the end of a long mountain chasm. Nothing is known, nothing is clear. Words appearing on a repaired red sandstone pillar...

Waking out of the dream with shouts and calling out Aoife's name. Waking beside him with fright is Aoife. She is calming him down, and asking him about the dream and what it was that had frightened him so; what it was that had given such a sorrowfulness to his countenance.

He is answering with,

"The earth is moved at the noise of their fall, at the cry the noise thereof was heard in the Red Sea. Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah: and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs."

Deeply troubled by these words, Aoife is encouraging him to go seek their interpretation of the aged hermit Deargbán.

Rísteárd took Aoife's words to himself and set out on foot to reach the dwelling place of Deargbán.

Deargbán listened very carefully to Rísteárd's account of the dream. And he too like Aoife was greatly troubled upon hearing of those words. He departed from Rísteárd awhile to a lonelier place to grieve.

It was noon before Deargbán returned to the hermitage whereupon he did make known to Rísteárd an interpretation of the words thereof.

Rísteárd had stayed all day at the hermitage before returning to the inn.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Rísteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him is his guest, Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Rísteárd Ah, this pleasing fire, Receptive revives to my eyes the sighting of *Alpha & Omega*.

Receptive How does it proceed, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Risteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?
I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Risteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another world)

Gentle breeze, carrying fragrances of spring, is meanderingly floata ~ rippling down from the hills. Among the various lifeforms that have instinctively congregated together in the penumbra of a large appleblossom tree are Earstosee, Chaubran, Eyestohear and Mysterymysteryismysterymystery.

Mysterymysteryismysterymystery saying,

'WhereuponaWherever, Mysterymystery Reality is formashaping itself into stars, planets and moons which are rota ~ floating themselves as mysterious patterns in ~ of the mystery of its space. Seek for a how? or a why? No need. Fewfarwi ...'

'Hey! Hey! Hey!'

'What?'

'You're doing it again! Pushing Loqui and myself to our limits! We can't express fully for you what you want us to express for you. We have neither the ability nor the resources. We have our limits! We're not human!'

'Please, do your best. I can appreciate your difficulties. Let's continue for you're doing a great job.'

'All right.'

'Few far wide and between it is form shaping itself into lifeforms which are delicating themselves as mysterious shapes on ~ of the mystery of its planets. Seek for a how? or a why? No need.

On one such planet, the human lifeform of the many lifeforms that cohabit it is making a very interesting discovery.'

Spokesperson at a spacecraft launching ceremony.

'This is indeed a historic day, ladies and gentlemen for our planet. Today we will launch a spacecraft that will carry the first human lifeforms to the second last planet in our solar system. All going according to plan they should be back with us in five years and two months to the day. When they return they will join our distinguished

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by having nineteen beautiful museum shrines erected in their honour.'

Five years and three months later. Same spokesperson.

'Although one month late, we extend a stupendous welcome home to you, our brave and finest planetanauts! How does it feel to have been the First humans to have travelled so far out in space?'

'I'm afraid we cannot speak of ourselves as Firsts although we had left here over five years ago with that very intention in mind.'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean that this planet we call home is in space already, as are its two moons, as well as the other eleven planets in the solar system, including the binary sun. We are already in space without ever leaving the planet. This is and always has been a natural rocket for all of us. First rocket, First animal lifeform, First human lifeform in space; First lunanauts, First planetanauts have no meaning. We are all Alpha & Omega spaceunauts.'

'I don't understand. But surely, can we not speak of first humans on our moons and on the other planets? I mean they are there and we are here. The cosmic ocean divides us. Does it not?'

'We have been able to detect a previously unknown substance in the fabric of space itself which has adhesive qualities, in that it mysteriates the moons to us and we to all the other planets in this solar system including the binary sun.

This substance reaches way out beyond this system to mysteriate us to all other planets and suns in this galaxy, and to all other galaxies without exception throughout the Universe.

It is most likely that there is no place where it doesn't exist, just as there is no place probably where space doesn't exist. This may be expressed as -

Both ~ in ~ one ~ one ~ in ~ both.

It shares in the same mysterious substances of which stars, planets, moons, and even we ourselves are formed, though in its un-starplanetmoonusary state its structure is very complex. It took us six hundred and eighty hours to figure out even its general structure. It may take years before we have a fuller understanding of it.'

'This is very interesting, planetanauts!'

'We could understand how our ancestors felt when they discovered that all the landmasses on this planet are actually connected as one landmass underneath the sea. The sea being merely a beautiful bluegreen veil.

Their discovery set us free to realize that there was no longer any grounds for speaking in terms of continents, countries and farms. We could see clearly that we are but one type of lifeform of very interesting diversity, cohabiting this one planet with numerous other lifeforms also of very interesting diversity. Remember how we all came together and with song and dance we gently took down all the walls and palisades.'

'Yes, those were wonderful years.'

'Let us then have the wisdom to do the same with all those museum shrines we so carefully erected for those who we referred to as our -

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and instead encourage the plant, insect and animal lifeforms to return to those places if they wouldn't mind, that is. It's enough that the information on discoveries be stored in our records.'

'This is wonderful! For although we had accepted with joy the discoveries made by our ancestors in connection with the physical oneness of this planet, we had somehow never thought that the same might also be true for the Universe. We've been thinking big in a small way.

When it comes to space, we have been teaching our children to think in terms of borders, ours, and firsts. Our Planet ~ Our Moons ~ Our Solar System ~ Our Galaxy.

It wouldn't have been long before we would be speaking of the Universe in terms of Our Universe. The Universe can't and shouldn't be corralled, however many wagons we might try to employ.'

'That being the case, then no lifeform can claim it as its own possession.

Poet Heart!

A poem with harp in accompaniment, if you please!"

Fly like a bird as high as you can over it but you will
never reach a top nor be able to see a below.

Dig as deep a hole as you can into it but you will
never reach a bottom nor be able to observe an above.

Travel as far as you can in any direction and in any
pattern you wish in out over under it but you will
never leave it or reach a border for it has no border.

Once again there will be green fields, lush hills,
dancing brooks, insects and animals in places
where there used to be museum shrines.

Dance oh dance one 'n all across the lush
dark dim flickering boundless field of the Universe.

Chorus of the Lifeforms with Mystery mystery is mystery mystery.

Fly like a bird

Ear to see, Chaubran and Eye to hear sitting on a soft
green carpet summery slope overlooking a great lake river.
Gentle breeze playing with the surface.

Earstosee ~ Eyestohear ~ Chaubran in conversation,

'So much smoothness spreading. So many patches of ripples floating. Floating patches of ripples mysteriating into spreading smoothness ~ spreading smoothness mysteriating into floating patches of ripples ~ floating patches of ripples mysteriating into spreading smoothness ~ ... '

'There's an ancient legend which says that if a floating ripple patch stands still but for a single moment in one place, it will change into a beautiful island with all kinds of interesting plants, insects, people and animals living on it. And that big patches become big countries, small patches become small countries and that's how the whole beautiful world was made.'

'Maybe if we watch carefully we might see an island appear.'

'WhereuponaWherever, Mysterymystery Reality is formashaping itself into patches of ripples ~ mysteriating into smoothness ~ smoothness mysteriating into patches of ripples; ripples ~ smoothness.'

'Wind of planet, wind of the Universe is of ripples ~ smoothness. Seek for a fromwhere? or a towhere? No need.'

'Mysterymystery Reality is formashaping itself itself without a how or a why. Without a how or a why is Mysterymystery Reality formashaping us.'

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Alpha & Omega* ~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.]

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive How much of our thinking, Rísteárd amounts to nothing more than thinking big in a small way?

Rísteárd (smiling) When I read of the profundities of Religions I say to myself, Receptive, here are the finest examples of thinking big in a small way; the profundities of Philosophies, Cosmologies, Astronomies, Mythologies, Prophecies, Politics, Science, Ethics, and the profundities of Chivalries I say to myself, all of these are the finest examples of thinking big in a small way.

Receptive (smiling) Is there anything at all Rísteárd that you've ever read or are reading are at present that you would consider to be the finest example of thinking big in a big way?

Rísteárd (smiling) When I read of the profundities in the patience, vision and wisdom of Ancestors I am aware, Receptive that I am in the presence of thinking that is big in a big way; the profundities in the patience, vision and wisdom of Great-Grandparents, Grandparents, a little Child's smiles, a

Mother's embrace, a Father's courage, the strollings of a Girl and Boy in love, a Dancer, a Singer, the warm-heartedness of the Harbingers of Hope, Sun's movements, a Hill's firmness, a Stream's meanderings, Ocean's ebb and flow, the confidence of the myriad Lifeforms, a Night's vision, and in the profundity of Spontaneity I am aware that in all these I am in the presence of thinking that is big in a big way.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) Of what do you say, Risteárd of your own views on religions, philosophies, cosmologies, astronomies, mythologies, prophecies, politics, science, ethics and chivalries?

Risteárd (smiling) When I read of the profundities of my own views on religions, philosophies, cosmologies, astronomies, mythologies, prophecies, politics, science, ethics and chivalries, I say to myself, Receptive here are the finest examples of thinking big in a small way.

Receptive (with surprise) Is there anything at all, Risteárd then in your own views on religions, philosophies, cosmologies, astronomies, mythologies, prophecies, politics, science, ethics

and chivalries that you would consider to be the finest example of thinking big in a big way?

Risteárd (smiling) When I reflect on the advent of Spontaneity in these do I become aware, Receptive that if they were alone but mine then I should stand mute.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) This *Risteárd* is the finest example I've ever heard of thinking that is big in a big way.

Risteárd (smiling) Blessed are you, Receptive that dwell in the house of Spontaneity; in whose sacred sanctuary are the ways of great thought.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you *Risteárd* for this is my hope.

Risteárd (smiling) What would you say to nice cup of tea, Receptive with some freshly baked white cake, butter and honey?

Receptive (happily) Sounds fantastic, *Risteárd*.

Aoife joins them for the tea.

She has started a chat with Receptive and Risteárd on these lines
from the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*

"The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it."

After tea.

Receptive (smiling) There are legends in kind, Risteárd of some
wonderful events which are handed down for generations
among a people, and popularly believed to have a historical
basis, although not verifiable, and which are distinguished
from myth. And then there are legends in kind which are the
collected stories of the life of a saint or of a number of saints.

Of all the legends in various kind ever spoken of down
through the ages on this sacred isle, which one of them,
Risteárd do you feel the most familiar with?

Risteárd (smiling very happily) I feel most familiar, Receptive
with *The Legend of Clouds Rain Down & Earth Brings Forth*.

Receptive (smiling) Is this a legend of some wonderful event,
Risteárd or the collected stories of the life of a saint or even the
lives of many different saints?

Rísteárd (smiling) It is the collected stories, Receptive of the wonderful events in the lives of thirty-nine saintly scholars.

Receptive (smiling) I've read that in the Golden Age of monasticism here on the isle, *Rísteárd*, the isle was admirably known abroad as *Insula sanctorum et doctorum* - the Isle of Saints and Scholars.

With such a great a proliferation of local saints from the fifth century A.D. onwards, and all the way down to these modern times, how is that *The Legend of Clouds Rain Down & Earth Brings Forth* contains all but thirty-nine of them?

Surely, however, *Rísteárd*, Saints Patrick, Declan, Brendan, Brigid, Columban, Colmcille, Carthage ... and Saint Laurence O'Toole must be counted among the thirty-nine, and although not yet officially canonized by Rome, the saintly man Venerable Matthaeus Talbot too.

Rísteárd These are the holy ones of a paradise lost, Receptive.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) Who then, Rísteárd are the thirty-nine
saintly scholars of *The Legend of Clouds Rain Down & Earth*
Brings Forth?

Rísteárd (smiling very happily)

Saintly Scholar Misty Night of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Great Countryside of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Save One of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Left Foot & Right Foot of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Six Carrying Two of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Attitude of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Three Members of Sacred Heart
Saintly Scholar Autumnal Leaves of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Truworth of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Sun of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Flying of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Surfacesight of Sacred Heart
Saintly Scholar Listen of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Look of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Golden Corn of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Moonstarry Nights of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Talentry of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Calm Lakeriver of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Officers Mess of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Windowsill of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Warm Ice Fields of Sacred Hearth
Saintly Scholar Opera House of Sacred Hearth

Saintly Scholar Beautiful Obscura of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar Beginning to Dawn of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar Faded Green Stole of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar One Quay of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar Harmony Restored of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar Who said I of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar Sounds & Scents of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar Nine Seconds of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar Place in Anyotherwhere of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar Fleur-de-lys Pendulum of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar Laughter of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar Broadcasting of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar Views in Movement of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar Our Essence of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar Unified Theory of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar You Can Believe It of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar Alpha & Omega of Sacred Hearth
 Saintly Scholar of Sacred Hearth

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (with surprise) How can this be, Rísteárd that so many saintly scholars can all come from the same place?

What is it about the village or monastery or environs of Sacred Hearth that has produced so many saintly scholars? Is Sacred Hearth, Risteárd located near from the inn or far from the inn?

Risteárd (smiling) In the near far from Receptive and in the far near.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) I believe, I know what a scholar is, being one myself, but of a saint, Risteárd I know very little, being myself not one.

Risteárd (smiling) A saint, Receptive is one who is set apart for a sacred purpose.

Receptive (smiling) For what sacred purpose have these thirty-nine, Risteárd been set apart?

Risteárd (smiling) They have been set apart, Receptive to rain down waters of life on the all but dried up sacred sanctuaries, and to bring forth from them seeds of truth.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) Was there One, Risteárd who inspired *The Legend of Clouds Rain Down & Earth Brings Forth?*

Risteárd (smiling very happily) Inspiration, Receptive comes upon the Wind from Golden Roses who dwells way way beyond the Within way way within the Beyond.

Receptive (smiling) Who is Golden Roses, Risteárd? Who is it that dwelling way way beyond the Within way way within the Beyond has so graciously taken it upon Him or Herself to have such waters in abundance rained down on the all but dried up sacred sanctuaries, and to be bringing forth from them seeds of truth? And even more significantly, why so at this crucial moment in our human history? Is the world as we know it perchance, Risteárd approaching some alpha of an omega; some omega of an alpha?

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling and with compassion) Seek and you will find, Receptive. With finding will come a great serenity. With serenity will come a great joy, and with joy all things needing to be known will be known.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, Rísteárd.

Rísteárd (smiling) You're very welcome, Receptive. Shall we call it so a night?

Receptive (smiling) I suppose it's better, Rísteárd.

Rest being important too.

Yet, I have so many questions left to be asking.

Rísteárd (smiling) The nights are many in number, and as many again in number are the stories needing to be told. If you are in no particular rush to leave the inn, then you are very welcome to sit yourself down there again tomorrow night, in that very same chair, where you may happily listen to whatever sighting the fire will bring to my eyes. And it would be my anticipation, Receptive that we would be following it with some very fine discourse as we did this night.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, Rísteárd. It's very good to be here.

Rísteárd You're most welcome, Receptive.

You go ahead now to your bed.

Take the candle from the table with you.

I will rake the fire.

Receptive Good night so, Rísteárd, and thanks again.

Rísteárd Have a sound sleep, Receptive.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Rísteárd *Exeunt*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Alpha & Omega*

Sunday Eve the 8th March 2003

Annotations:

Alpha and Omega - 'A' 'Alpha' from Greek, of Phoenician origin. The first letter of the Greek alphabet. The first one; the beginning. 'W' 'Omega' from Middle English, from Greek 'mega', 'large.' The 24th letter of the Greek alphabet. The last one; the end. Alpha and Omega is a noun meaning, 'The first and the last.' 'The most important part.'

The earth is moved ... - from the Old Testament, Jeremiah 49.21-22

The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam - *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* is a collection of verses written by or attributed to 'Umar Khayyam, the Persian mathematician, philosopher and astronomer who lived from ca. 1048-1122.



Oidhche Dhomhnaigh Cois Tine Mhóna

ACT 40. *Mountain Plateau*

Prologue:

Spring!

Spring insignia!

Ró ~ ró ~ rá ~ ró ~ rí ~ rí agus céad míle míle fáilte!

Isle of Éire is with spring!

Yellgowlden in the green carpeted hill country of Déisi Mumhan are pretty rosary beads of furze, primroses, daffodils, buttercups, and canopied here and there by majestic pines; majestic cone-bearing Scots Pine. Meandering along along in the sunshine by way of soft sweepabout about ripples is the beautiful Glandhuan.

Rísteárd sitting by a warm spring atop a hill is happily viewing all this translating and is contentedly aware that he too is of this translation. Soft and silky in the palm of his hand does the warm spring water feel; soft and silky upon his lips, tongue and throat.

Imagining is he that he is sitting about the top of a hydrothermal vent of the purest cleanest kind that has reached up from the ocean floor way way below.

Imagining is he that the whole isle is a beautiful green hydrothermal vent that has reached up from the ocean floor way way below.

Imagining is he that all the isles great and small of this sui generis Orb are all colourful hydrothermal vents that have reached up from the ocean floor way way below.

Letting his thoughts float way down adown to the ocean floor he is visiting gardens of hydrothermal vents of various kinds, heights, shapes, and forms where roundabout them lifeforms of great variety are abounding.

Spontaneously he is taking to lilting a three-line song.

In inorganic organic already is.

In inorganic becoming organic all ready in readiness in is.

In readiness already organic in inorganic all ready is.

Leaping in thought.

My Sacred Sanctuary is a vent of rarest kind welling up and spreading out the warm waters of life for my landscape. Vent Sacred Sanctuary is of this isle vent; of this flota-orbiting bubble Earth of vent Galaxy.

Leaping in thought.

Galaxies are vents of various kinds, shapes and forms welling up and spreading out warm springs! Everywhere to be seen galactic vents of various heights brightly bubbling forth myriads of colourful star and planet bubbles. Earth Orb a bubble teaming with life has come forth from this warm spring. Myriad vents teaming with life are springing forth from within the great ocean of Earth Orb. Some vents

are barely rising a few metres above the ocean floor while others are rising all the way up through the waves to the surface here, while others are rising all the way up into the clouds and even higher into the atmosphere.

Leaping in thought.

Lifeforms are impartial to great depths or great heights; extremes of cold or extremes of heat. Where there is a vent be it boiling hot, warm, genial or lukewarm; be it in dew, frost, snow or ice sojourning there becometh lifeforms; there nourisheth lifeforms, and there dwelleth lifeforms until they returneth into the surroundings.

Some lifeforms take a liking to staying close by their native vent while others take to venturing near and far abroad and never returning; while others again take a liking to coming and going. Our humankind is one such lifeform of the multitude that here and there takes a liking to staying close by, venturing abroad without returning or even coming and going.

WHAT is the question. WHAT is the answer.

WHY is the question. WHY is the answer.

MYSTERYMYSTERY is the question.

MYSTERYMYSTERY is the answer.

MYSTERYMYSTERY is the WHAT and the WHY; the WHY and the WHAT is MYSTERYMYSTERY.

With such serene mystical thoughts is Rísteárd descending from the hilltop to spend this glorious spring day strolling in the warm company of the myriad translations; strolling in the warm company of spontaneity.

Ah, in the distance coming into view the lovely hazel grove of summers to come.

Supper is now over in the cosy botháin ósta. Rísteárd is putting some more turf on the fire; the fire that is never allowed to quench. Sitting across the hearth from him is his guest, Receptive.

The fire glows interesting shadows up the walls to the rafters to join up with those already making sport there from the candle over on the windowsill and from the one on the table.

Rísteárd Ah, this pleasing fire, Receptive revives to my eyes the sighting of *Mountain Plateau*.

Receptive How does it proceed, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (silently invoking)

Oh benevolent ancestors of our people;
Vigilant custodians of the isle's sacred hearths.
Bless my tongue and lips this Sunday Eve
That I may with a good grace, and
In a style worthy of your revered tradition,
Announce to my honoured guest, Receptive
This sighting of the hearth.

And may the blessings of those pastoral sojourners of Bygone
Eves be upon Receptive too;
Who in their search with Truth and Eternity,
Were welcomed inside many the threshold,
To listen to stories grand, and
Contribute words profound.

Inspire memorable questions and gratifying elucidation
That we two may enjoy marvellous discourse.

And may this night's humble bequest to posterity
Be worthy of acceptance into your hearts.

Risteárd (smiling) Now where shall I begin?
I suppose no better place to begin than at the very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Receptive (smiling) Then I will begin my listening also from the
very beginning.

Risteárd (in a slow soft melodious voice of a lovely blas and of intonations
iridescent; the kind of voice that would be carrying one away into another
world)

Relativity is standing on a mountain plateau looking
anxiously out at the broad twilight coloured sky.

Wind.

'Hello there? Why are you staring far out into the outthere? You look like you've lost someone.'

'I have. Two someones.'

'Whooo?'

'My parents. It was they that brought me into existence, sustained me and gave meaning to my life. Without them I'm nothing. Without me their existence will be empty. Only Place remains.'

'How did it happen?'

'I don't know. I can't understand it. We were such a united family. There was no reason for them to leave. It all happened without any notice. Just up and gone.'

First, Mother Time failed to return from the valley where she had been gathering some herbs. Father Change went to look for her. He said he would find her and they would return safely together. They did not return, so I went to search for them, but I was afraid to go too far away from our house so I returned and have been here since, all alone, anxiously awaiting their arrival.'

'But Place you're still here! Why would that be, I wonder?'

'I'm everywhere here as you well know. Change, Time and their offspring here, came to me when he was but a baby, looking for an abode in which to live, work, and rear their son.'

As you know, I turn nobody away.'

'I met both of them.'

'Where? Please lead me to them.'

'I don't have any need to remember wheres. So I don't know where I met them.'

'Were they together?'

'No, I met them in different wheres. They were completely lost.'

'What did they say to you?'

'Time asked if I'd seen Change and yourself. I said that I hadn't. She was desperately looking for both of you.'

'Poor Mother Time. What about Father Change?'

'He asked if I'd seen Time and yourself. I told him that I had met Time. Like you they were gravely feeling the loss of the other two. Also like you they were in the company of Place.'

'Yes, I'm everywhere.'

'Then, why didn't you tell me where they were?'

'I may be everywhere but I've no idea of where I am so how could I possibly know where they are? I'm where I am wherever I am.'

'Did they happen to mention what they were going to do next?'

'I'm afraid they don't exist as Time and Change anymore.'

'What? Why? What happened to them? This is a great tragedy.'

'As I spoke they shimmered out of their existences. Some shimmerings gently floated up to foldmingle with me while others spread softly out onto broad PlaceWheres. We turn nobody away.'

'What caused them to shimmer?'

'I don't know, exactly. It just spontaneously happened within and around them. Accept the reality as they did. You're free to go.'

'Very well. Thank you for putting up with me.'

Silence as Relatively shimmers gently away out of his existence, some shimmerings floating upwards, downwards, and aroundwards.

PlacePlateauWind.

'I am wherever I am Place, though I may be called by countless names such as -
PlaceGalaxyStarPlanetPlateauWindWaterAirFireGasSpaceThisli
feformPlantHumanAnimalInsectQuantoMacroBirdFishReptileS
piritImaginationIdeaMatterChiElectricityLightDarkDimlyvisible
Book ... and even PlaceHandaxe.

Herethere I am clearly visible PlaceMulti and therehere
I'm clearly invisible PlaceMulti. I am wherever Place and Place
wherever I am. I am the Wherever. I have no need of Time,
Change or Relativity, though somehow I must have obviously

thought otherwise. I wonder why I took it upon myself to bring them into existence? Curiosity perhaps? Really I don't know who I am other than I'm spontaneously happeningandthat is it. My'm Mysterymystery.

This has been a very interesting experience for when I tried to establish boundaries and claim to know who I am, then I was able to see that I was no longer talking about Mysterymysteryself. It's well that I allowed the experience to shimmer away. I accept fully who I am though I don't know who I am. If I didn't, I would not be me and that would not do.' Chaubran.

'Who is this me that you speak of?'

'Mysterymystery, of course.'

'But I have seen with my own eyes the changing of the seasons.'

'Ah, PlaceChaubran speaks of himself as a having a distinct boundary from PlaceSeasons which too are defined by him as having boundaries of their own.

And this PlaceChaubran then goes on to claim that he can know PlaceSeasons are changing? This is very interesting. Supports just what I've said.'

'But I have seen that there is a definite difference between daytime and nighttime, morning and afternoon. When I was a baby, my body was small and frail but now it is big and strong. Everything is changing and transforming itself

spontaneously in time. As such there are and can be no absolutes, no fixed forms. Light and shadow are continuously intertwining and folding. All is relative. Is this not the way things are and have always been and will always be? Is this not the best of all possible interpretations be they religious, philosophical or otherwise?

I have given a great deal of thought to this and have concluded that in fact it is the best. How can you say then that you have no need for Change, Time and Relativity? Without our ancient ones having the insight and courage to bring them into existence and their descendants the wisdom to carry on the tradition, where would we be now?'

'Everywhere! You haven't heard anything I've said. Happening is whole. I'm the Wherever Mysterymystery.

When I tried to establish boundaries and claimed to know, I was already beginning to lose myself. Imysterymystery'm the absolute in universal and particular.

PlaceRelativity would deny me that. When he understood that he himself was in fact an absolute and that I was the ultimate absolute, however hard he tried to show and claim that not to be the case, he had no alternative but to shimmer and I let him. He just couldn't cope with the existence of absolutes. It went against everything he stood for.

When PlaceTime discovered that she was but queen of this tiny little planet, when she was fully convinced that she was queen of the whole Universe, she left the other two and shimmered and I let her. The vastness of the Universe was too awesome for her.

PlaceChange felt that he was superior to the other two and often spoke of living on his own. In fact on several occasions he went off to be alone with every intention of never again returning to the other two. But his attraction for PlaceTime was too strong to keep him away for too long.

On one of these sojourns into PlaceWilderness he felt the presence of someone who seemed to have a similar function as himself though very very different from him somehow, though he could not say exactly how, who or in what way. Change shimmered and I let him.

Do you know whose presence he had felt?

'Happening? Spontaneity?'

'You're catching on. You herethere are

PlaceChaubranWindRockTreeAirDarkskyStarrySky ...

and I therehere am

PlacePlateauWindRockTreeAirDarkskyStarrysky...'

'But there's no end in sight! If I could speak every language known to human kind, I would never be able to reach an end of it.'

'Who's talking about using sounding tongues? We are heretheretherehere Wherever. We are heretheretherehere Mysterymystery. We happen spontaneously together as Wherever Wherever. Saypicture It.'

'Ah. Tao?'

'If you understand what is fully meant by Tao as put forward in *Place Treatise on the Principle and its Action* and in *Place Treatise of the Transcendent Master from Nan Hua* then you have definitely come very close to the heart of the matter. But you have to go much further than Tao.'

'I've got it! I've got it! God?'

'No, you've lost it. You've lost it. And you were doing so nicely up to then. Backtrack sideways and continue again.'

'Ah ...? I can't express It! I don't know how to...'

'Saypicture It.'

'I can't! My tongue can't express It!'

'Forget your bounding tongue. It can't help you. Use instead your tongue that paints.'

~Mmmmmmmmyyyyyyysssssstttttteeeeeerrrrrryyyyyyymmm
mmmmmyyyyyyysssssstttttteeeeeerrrrrryyyyyy~

'Wonderful! Happen accordingly with joy.'

'Yes! Yes! Yes!'

'Through this very interesting experience of mine I've been able to dimly see that in trying to get know who I am, I

have been faced with denying who I am and so I had to give it up.'

'Why did you feel you wanted to get to know who you are?'

'I don't know of any whys. I guess it just happened spontaneously. Interesting isn't it?'

In the same way, though it has been a very interesting experience for your ancestors and no doubt, for yourself, you ought to allow PlaceHandaxe to shimmer. Your ancestors thought that by bringing PlaceHandaxe into existence they would be able to increase and extend enormously that which they believe to be weak, namely, themselves. However, this has been a denial of their own power. PlaceHandaxe will only try to convince you that you are weak and very much in need of his help when in fact the truth of the matter is PlaceHumans are very strong. Accept what lawme really is and happen spontaneously accordingly.'

'Wonderful! I must admit that although I took the relativistic stand as the most reasonable and acceptable of all possible interpretations, something deep down within me was beginning to have problems with it. Yet, I was unable to see what that was exactly until I listened to you.'

'The lack of an ultimate absolute?'

'Yes, that was it. I was aware that the relativistic stand itself was an absolute of sorts but it had a habit of somehow

preventing me from going on any further in order to find an ultimate absolute. You set me free to do so.

Mysterymystery in the universalandparticular.

Mysterymystery the Wherever.

Mysterymystery Reality.

Mysterymystery me.'

'See! PlaceMysteria beckons to you. Go to be with her and know that I'll be with you both Wherever as you will be with me Wherever. Happen spontaneously as a cojoyfulmultihazymystical place.'

'Mysteria! Mysteria! Mysteria! Oh, my Beloved to singaflotadancea ...'

And that, Receptive in a translated form is *Mountain Plateau* ~ a sighting of the sacred hearth.]

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive Rísteárd do you know who you are? Do you know who it is you really are?

Rísteárd (smiling) I am spontaneously happening, Receptive and that is who I am. I am wherever a place and a place wherever I am. I am Wherever. My am of Mystery *mystery*.

Moments of reflective silence.

Quite spontaneously Receptive is becoming enraptured; yet it seems to be of the self-induced artificial kind.

Receptive (in vulgate Latin)

"in anno quo mortuus est rex Ozias vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum et ea quae sub eo erant implebant templum"

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

"seraphin stabant super illud sex alae uni et sex alae alteri duabus velabant faciem eius et duabus velabant pedes eius et duabus volabant"

Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

"et clamabant alter ad alterum et dicebant sanctus sanctus sanctus Dominus exercituum plena est omnis terra gloria eius"

And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

"et commota sunt superliminaria cardinum a voce clamantis et domus impleta est fumo"

And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

"et dixi vae mihi quia tacui quia vir pollutus labiis ego sum et in medio populi polluta labia habentis ego habito et Regem Dominum exercituum vidi oculis meis"

Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

"et volavit ad me unus de seraphin et in manu eius calculus quem forcipe tulerat de altari"

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

"et tetigit os meum et dixit ecce tetigit hoc labia tua et auferetur iniquitas tua et peccatum tuum mundabitur"

And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

"et audiui vocem Domini dicentis quem mittam et quis ibit nobis et dixi ecce ego sum mitte me"

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

"et dixit vade et dices populo huic audite audientes et nolite intellegere et videte visionem et nolite cognoscere"

And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

"excaeca cor populi huius et aures eius adgrava et oculos eius claude ne forte videat oculis suis et auribus suis audiat et corde suo intellegat et convertatur et sanem eum"

Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

"et dixi usquequo Domine et dixit donec desolentur civitates absque habitatore et domus sine homine et terra relinquetur deserta"

Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

"et longe faciet Dominus homines et multiplicabitur quae derelicta fuerat in medio terrae"

And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

"et adhuc in ea decimatio et convertetur et erit in ostensionem sicut terebinthus et sicuti quercus quae expandit ramos suos semen sanctum erit id quod steterit in ea"

But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

"vox populi de civitate vox de templo vox Domini
reddentis retributionem inimicis suis"

A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompence to his enemies.

Long silence.

Receptive (with solemnity but no longer in an enraptured state)

Risteárd in all truth you are the one being spoken of in those prophetic words from the *Holy Text*. You are for our day the Holy Prophet of the Lord; the voice from the mount, the voice from the city, the voice from the temple, the voice of the Lord.

Risteárd is in tears of laughter at such an outlandish notion.

Risteárd (with laughter going into smiling) Receptive I simply am Risteárd Mac Grailt the innkeeper dwelling with his bright wife and delightful children here in the beautiful hill country of Déisi Mumhan, on the lovely isle of Éire, in the Great Ocean of this orbital Jewel of rarest quality.

We are spontaneously happening and that is who we are. We are wherever places and places wherever we are. We are Wherever. We are of Mystery *mystery*.

Moments of reflective silence.

Rísteárd (smiling) How many verses, Receptive does Chapter 6 of the *Book of Isaiah* contain?

Receptive (smiling) It contains thirteen, *Rísteárd*. Why?

Rísteárd (smiling) Are you sure, Receptive?

Receptive (with wondering) Yes, I'm quite sure, *Rísteárd*.

Rísteárd (smiling) What is its final verse, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling)

"et adhuc in ea decimatio et convertetur et erit in ostensionem sicut terebinthus et sicuti quercus quae expandit ramos suos semen sanctum erit id quod steterit in ea"

But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

Rísteárd (smiling) Yet a little while ago in your alluring,
Receptive you included an extra verse.

Receptive (surprised) I was not aware truly that I had
done so, *Rísteárd*. What verse did I include?

Rísteárd (smiling) You included, Receptive the verse,
"vox populi de civitate vox de templo vox Domini reddentis
retributionem inimicis suis"

A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice
of the LORD that rendereth recompence to his enemies.

Receptive (with surprise) Did I really, *Rísteárd*?

Rísteárd (smiling) Yes, Receptive. Yes, you really did.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (with all truthfulness) I couldn't have, surely. How
did I do that, *Rísteárd*? Very strange indeed. Most unusual. I
never make a mistake in quoting the *Holy Text*, *Rísteárd* for I
have from an early age consigned every word of it to memory.

Rísteárd (smiling) From whence does this extra verse come,
Receptive?

Receptive (with turning pale) Without any doubt in my mind, Risteárd it is 66:6 from the *Book of Isaiah*. Oh my, not in the words at all but in the reference is the subliminal silhouette!

Long reflective silence.

Receptive I'll listen very carefully to what I'm saying in quotation in future, Risteárd rather than merely quoting that others alone may listen.

Risteárd (smiling) And what of self-induced enrapture, Receptive?

Receptive (smiling) I've learnt my lesson well this night, Risteárd. That's the end of that kind of risky foolishness from now on, I can tell you, Risteárd.

Moments of reflective silence.

Risteárd (smiling) What would you say to a nice cup of tea, Receptive with some freshly baked gâteau?

Receptive (happily) I would love some freshly baked gateau
and tea, Rísteárd.

Aoife and the children have come and joined them for the tea.
Happy happy stories are being told by all.

After tea.

Receptive (smiling) What is the Supreme Absolute, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) Wherever Mysterymystery.

Receptive (smiling) How does Wherever Mysterymystery
happen, Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) Wherever Mysterymystery happens
spontaneously, Receptive.

Moments of reflective silence.

Receptive (smiling) What is at the heart of spontaneity,
Rísteárd?

Rísteárd (smiling) Morality. Morality, Receptive is found at
the heart of spontaneity.

Receptive (smiling) Wow! I didn't see that one coming, Risteárd.

Risteárd (smiling) True morality of the highest, deepest, widest, furthest, nearest and innermost kind, Receptive is at the heart of spontaneity.

Receptive (smiling) And of immorality is that too to be found at the heart of spontaneity, Risteárd? For it seems to me that immoral actions are quite spontaneous as are the moral ones.

Risteárd (smiling) To know spontaneity is to be walking in the company of the very best, Receptive. Spontaneity is the Way that is moral, the Truth that is moral, and the Life that is moral.

Receptive (smiling) But from whence, Risteárd does come immorality?

Risteárd (smiling) Receptive, when one is completely convinced in one's sacred sanctuary of the goodness incomparable of Wherever Mysterymystery, one with great joy abides in the Way, the Truth, and the Life that is truly spontaneous.

Receptive (smiling) In other words, are you saying, Risteárd that the one who acts immorally is the one who doubts or at

least who is not completely convinced in one's sacred
sanctuary of the goodness of Wherever Mysterymystery?

Rísteárd (smiling) Receptive, when one is completely
convinced in one's sacred sanctuary of the goodness
incomparable of Wherever Mysterymystery, one with great joy
abides in the Way, the Truth, and the Life that is truly
spontaneous.

Moments of reflective silence.

Rísteárd (smiling very very happily) Blessed are they Receptive
who are completely convinced in their sacred sanctuaries of the
goodness incomparable of Wherever Mysterymystery.

Blessed are they who walk in the company of
spontaneity; who with great joy abide in the Way, the Truth,
and the Life that is truly spontaneous.

How admirable; how amiable and beautiful are the ways
of spontaneity.

How beautiful in one's sacred sanctuary everywhere to
be seen are the joyful tidings of spontaneity.

How beautiful upon the mountains everywhere to be
seen are the joyful insignia of spontaneity.

How beautiful with the myriad lifeforms everywhere to be seen are the joyful happenings of spontaneity.

How beautiful and blessed in the family everywhere to be seen are the precious flowers of spontaneity.

Blessed and most joyful, Receptive is the one who walks in the company of spontaneity.

Receptive (smiling very happily) I love your words, Risteárd and your way, for you speak with such joyfilling loveliness, conviction, and authority.

Risteárd (smiling very very happily) Conviction, Receptive is in the goodness incomparable of Wherever Mysterymystery. Authority comes with abiding in the Way, the Truth, and the Life that is truly spontaneous. Loveliness is Wherever Mysterymystery.

Receptive (smiling very happily) So beautiful are these words, Risteárd and your countenance when expressing them.

Risteárd (smiling very very happily) Blessed are you Receptive who are near from the company of spontaneity.

Spontaneity is always gentle and kind, Receptive and will welcome you wherever you are ready to walk in company. In your seeking, Peace and Blessings be with you.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, Rísteárd.

Rísteárd (smiling) You're very welcome, Receptive.
Shall we call it a night?

Receptive (smiling) I suppose it's better, Rísteárd.
Rest being important too.

Rísteárd (smiling) The nights are many in number, and as many again in number are the stories needing to be told. If you are in no particular rush to leave the inn, then you are very welcome to sit yourself down there again tomorrow night, in that very same chair, where you may happily listen to whatever sighting the fire will bring to my eyes. And it would be my anticipation, Receptive that we would be following it with some very fine discourse as we did this night.

Receptive (smiling) Thank you, Rísteárd. It's very good to be here.

Rísteárd You're most welcome, Receptive.
You go ahead now to your bed.
Take the candle from the table with you.
I will rake the fire.

Receptive Good night so, Rísteárd, and thanks again.

Rísteárd Have a sound sleep, Receptive.

Familiar sounds of the fire being raked by way of gentle touch.

Rísteárd *Exeunt to stroll in the moonlight with Aoife*

Sighting of the sacred hearth: *Mountain Plateau*

Sunday Eve the 22nd March 2003

Annotations:

agus céad míle míle fáilte - from Gaedhilige, meaning 'and a hundred thousand thousand welcomes (to you)'

hydrothermal vents - "In 1977, researchers in the deep-sea submersible Alvin made a discovery that would revolutionize biology: a community of organisms - six-foot, red-tipped tube worms; large, white clams; yellow mussels and pale crabs - living near hydrothermal vents (underwater hot springs) thousands of feet below the surface of the sea.

In the dark waters of the seafloor, this community relied not on sunlight for its energy but on decomposition of sulfur compounds in the rising hot water. The organisms that carry on this process were single-celled organisms even more primitive than bacteria, called archaea.

Soon the researchers were suggesting that life on Earth may have arisen in or near hydrothermal vents ..."

[Source: SCIENCE dated, November 6th 2001, *Hydrothermal Vents: Life's First Home?*]

"Marine scientists surveying an unexplored mountain range deep beneath the Arctic Ocean have discovered at least nine hydrothermal vents on the Gakkel Ridge, a mid-ocean mountain range that snakes for 1,100 miles (1,770 kilometers) from high above Greenland to Siberia ..."

[Source: National Geographic News dated, January 23rd 2003, *Hydrothermal Vents Found in Arctic Ocean*]

sui generis - from Latin, meaning 'of its own kind' - unique

Principle and its Action - Ancient title for the work ascribed to Lao Tzu

namely the *Dao De Jing*

Transcendent Master from Nan Hua - Ascribed to Chuang-Tzu, namely the *Nan Hua Chen Jing*

Cluain Uamha - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'cave meadow' - located in southwestern Déisi Mumhan

Caisleán an Ridire Rósréalta - from Gaedhilge, meaning 'Castle of the Knight Rosestar'

